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JAN 26 1956

THE
IMPORTANCE
OF
SMALL THINGS;
OR,
A PLAIN COURSE OF SELF-EXAMINATION
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

BY JOHN HERSEY.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."—*2d Cor. xiii.*—5.

"O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"—*Matt. xvi.*—3.

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PREFACE.

IN submitting the following remarks to the christian world, through the medium of the press, I have been influenced by a sense of duty. Had I consulted my own feelings, or public opinion, they would never have appeared in their present form.

I claim not the enviable privilege of being free from those shackles, frequently imposed on mankind in early life, through the influence of education, and generally confirmed by habits of riper years;—but my heart's desire, and prayer to God is, that I may be delivered from the bondage of sectarian prejudice, and elevated into the image of the free born sons of God. "*Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.*"

In our fallen state, however, we generally view the fair side of the picture, when we examine our own portrait. We can perceive few, or no defects in our own character or sentiments; nor are we more willing to recognise blemishes in the character and sentiments of our friends: hence the foundation of party spirit,—prejudice and bigotry, which blind our eyes, warp our judgements, and contract our minds into a little uncharitable, deformed mould: In this unenviable state *we cannot err—our party is infallible!* Too much of this spirit has crept into the church, and darkened the fair features of God's children.

We should ever be more willing to detect and correct errors in ourselves than in others. This principle is plainly taught, and affectionately enforced by our divine Redeemer, who says—"Judge not, that ye be not judged, for with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye; and beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye." This divine rule faith-

fully observed, would soon harmonize the warring elements of our fallen nature, and throw a golden chain of peace and love around the broken fragments of a disordered world.

The word of God, which should be the Christian's infallible guide, condemns and exposes the crimes of the man after God's own heart, and Israel's favourite king, as promptly and faithfully, when he departs from the standard of righteousness, as those of the man who caused the streets of Jerusalem to run with innocent blood. Peter's cowardice and crime, when he denied his divine Master, are as faithfully exhibited to public view, as his firmness and superior virtues are on other occasions.

In looking attentively into the gospel glass, I have been alarmed for the state of the church. If the principles laid down in the gospel are to form the standard by which we are to be judged in the great day, then is our condition deplorable. We have widened the king's high-way—Our personal holiness is imperfect—Our practical piety is not as deep and uniform as it should be—Our faith is weak—Our charity is defective—Our zeal is languid; and our prejudices and partialities, obscure the native loveliness of the christian character. Others have been deceived—we are men of like passions with them, and should be cautious and prudent in every step of life.

It may be asked how are these evils to be remedied? Every individual must commence the important business in the proper place—viz. *in his own heart*.—In this way the great work of reformation may be effected at once; nor can we reasonably hope to see it accomplished in any other way.

It is very possible that some of my views and sentiments may differ materially from those of many of my brethren in the church; if so, I hope there will be no discord in our feelings—If we cannot see and think alike—we *can*—*we must love one another*: I only request a candid, impartial, and careful investigation of the sentiments I have advanced; if they be not consistent with *reason, righteousness, and truth*, they must fall to the ground, and should be promptly rejected. That which will not bear the strictest scrutiny when compared with God's word, rationally understood, will not stand when the great white throne shall appear; from the face of him that sitteth thereon the heavens and the earth shall flee away.

My design is neither to introduce new theories, nor to separate brethren already bleeding at almost every pore, from wounds inflicted by hands which should have been employed

in binding up the bruises of our fallen nature. I have aimed no poisoned arrow of envy or malice, at those who may differ from me in opinion. We are all children of one common Father, and should exercise a fraternal regard for each other. Without charity we are expressly declared to be *nothing*. "*Charity seeketh not her own.*" It is the love of God shed abroad in the heart, which widens and expands the soul to receive into its arms of mercy all the children of God, in whatever country or clime they may dwell; in whatever condition of life they may be placed, or by whatever complexion they may be distinguished.

In the system of theology, or the religion of Jesus Christ, there can be nothing new, unless its author could change.—Additional light may present the various features of Salvation more distinctly to our view, and display new beauties which the shades of ignorance or error had before concealed from our eyes.—The appearance of the sun above the horizon, does not vary or change the order or complexion of animate or inanimate nature, but throws a lustre on the wide spread scenery, which enables us to view, with increased interest and delight, the wonders and beauties of creation.

In almost every transaction of man's life, his ignorance and imbecility is perceptible. Every effort he makes to conceal the deformity of his mind, only discloses to view some new and more mortifying defect. Every twig in the forest—every pebble on the shore;—the silent heavens—the listching earth, and the restless ocean, all proclaim aloud in reason's ear, and confirm that melancholy truth, revealed in God's holy book, *i. e.*, man is a fallen creature. "*Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.*"

Though man in his fallen state is a dependant, ignorant, impotent, restless and unhappy being—the creature of a moment; without any *inherent* power, or wisdom, or virtue; and diminutive beyond description, yet he overlooks, or views with contempt, "the day of SMALL THINGS." He soars to the skies, and builds castles in the air; and does not deign to look down on insects like himself crawling on the earth, and crumbling into dust. LITTLE THINGS, are quite beneath his notice. He gazes with delight upon splendid palaces, and ardently pants after the pomp and grandeur of this visionary world. Proceeding thus with his eyes fixed on the stars, and his mind absorbed by the *glories of to-morrow*, man stumbles over a pebble—falls into the grave, and is seen no more among men.

Unfortunately, ameng professors of religion SMALL THINGS

are too generally overlooked, or passed by with indifference. How different the character and sentiments of our divine Master, in relation to this subject, of him who spoke as never man spake—who said let there be light, and there was light; who is the wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father the Prince of Peace—The Lord of life and glory.

He says that not a *sparrow is forgotten before God*; but even the very hairs of our heads are all numbered; and for every idle word that men shall speak they must give an account in the day of judgement.

He attentively observed, and highly commended the poor widow, when she cast two mites into the Lord's treasury. And after feeding five thousand men besides women and children with a few loaves and fishes, he commanded his disciples to gather up the remaining fragments, that nothing might be lost; thereby teaching them this impressive lesson;—you cannot make one *crumb*, therefore do not waste the *smallest fragment*.

In the following remarks I have aimed at nothing *great*, or *learned*, or *wise* in the estimation of men; if I had made such an attempt, it would only have exposed me to the pity, or the merited contempt of every discerning mind. I have however vanity enough to believe that the really *wise*, and *learned*, and *pious* may be profited though they may not be pleased, by a careful perusal of this little book.

The *doctrines* of the gospel, and the whole system of theology, have been so ably defended by modern divines that they are placed above the reach of every menacing enemy. The tallest sons of Anak have been paralyzed and silenced. There has been such a flood of light flowing into the bosom of the church for the last half century that *Infidelity* has been confounded, and compelled to retire from the open walks of honourable life. That highest head of Satan, has been, as it were, wounded to death.

By the powerful and conclusive arguments of the servants of God Infidelity has been driven from the open field of combat—from the light of day; nor would it have a resting place—a spot of earth on which to stand or move its withering limbs and faltering tongue, were it not for the careless—negligent walk, and unholy lives of professing christians. It only remains now to attend faithfully to the observance of all the SMALL THINGS enjoined by the Gospel, as well as the weightier matters of the law, that *unbelief* may be driven from the habitation of mortals; angels and

men may then join to sing that triumphant song—" *The Kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdoms of our God and his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.*"

There is so much light now shining in the christian world, and so much has been said and written by wise and learned and pious men, on the subject of religion, that the following remarks may be considered as an intrusion on the public, which demand an apology.—I can make none. My design has not been to amuse, or please the fancy, but to benefit my fellow travellers to boundless eternity. If in this I should be disappointed, the testimony of a good conscience will at least be secured to the

AUTHOR.

THE
IMPORTANCE
OF
SMALL THINGS.

I HAVE long been convinced that professors of religion, generally, are too careless—that we do not feel as forcibly as we ought the weight and importance of the subject of salvation. Religion is Love; and where *love* is the theme, *indifference is death*.

Inattention to business and a careless disposition, are the certain roads to poverty and shame. Our Divine Master says, the “children of this world are in their generation, wiser than the children of light.”—The children of this world, who look to the perishing things of time and sense, as the source of all their happiness, are very careful in the management of *small things*. If they are induced to believe, or even to suspect, that there is a flaw in the title to their earthly possessions, they will not rest satisfied until the subject is investigated and the error is corrected. The traveller is particularly careful in examining the roads; he is not ashamed to ask and receive information of a poor ignorant African; and if his mind is in a state of

suspence respecting the right way, he feels neither peace nor rest until the difficulty is removed. But when we turn to those who are called the children of the light, and should be the light of the world, how astonishing it is to find them, in the momentous concerns of eternity and religion, where an error in judgement may lead to an error in practice, and terminate in eternal ruin—all perfectly confident in their own opinions nor do they for a moment doubt that they are right, though on that supposition all the rest of the world must be in the wrong. In many instances, the sentiments and opinions of different persons, are in direct opposition to each other—yet both parties are equally confident that they are right, consequently both cannot receive their impressions from heaven; and that which does not emanate from, cannot lead to God.

It is evidently the design and will of Almighty God, in giving man his revealed word, that all who hear it should attend to all things contained therein—“*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by Angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience, received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*” Hence the necessity of attending carefully to the impressive duty enjoined in our text—

“Examine yourselves.” In discharging this important duty, we shall,

FIRST,—EXAMINE *whether there can be any allowance made by a just and holy God, in the day of judgement, on account of our INFIRMITIES, or for a failure on any other ground, to comply with the plain requisitions of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with which we had power to comply; and*

SECONDLY—EXAMINE *what the Gospel requires of man; HOW, and WHEN, its requisitions are to be attended to.*

1. Can there be any allowance made in the judgement day, if we fail to comply with the requisitions of the Gospel, admitting that we had the power to fulfil those requisitions? Christ expressly says—“*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.**” Our business is not with those who are *necessarily* ignorant of the Gospel of Christ, but with those who have the word of God in their possession, and may hear it expounded as often as they will. To suppose that persons who are favoured with the privileges of Christ’s church, and the written word of God, can enter into heaven *without measuring up to the appointed standard*, would be to impeach the character of Almighty God, and cast a veil of deformity over his attributes. Would it be wise in any sovereign to enact unnecessary laws, and make useless regulations for the government of his subjects?

And can we suppose that the infinitely wise God who rules in heaven and on earth, at whose fiat all nature waked into existence, moving in obedience to his word and will, would give dependent man a rule to regulate his actions, which it would be unnecessary for him strictly and religiously to observe?

If a very slight deviation from the high and holy standard of the gospel can be excused, or overlooked in the day of judgement, on the ground of *God's infinite mercy, or of man's infirmities*, then a more important deviation may be passed by, or else *the first offence becomes the standard, and not the word of God!* And if one can be excused who is a very slight delinquent, another may who is *a very little below him*, and another a shade lower still, &c. until by this process the bottomless pit would be swept of all its incumbents—not one would be left there; the great gulf which Abraham assured the rich man was impassable, and fixed between the two places, would be filled up and paved with mercy torn from the insulted justice of God; heaven and hell would be connected together, and identified as one place! When the *justice of God* fails, or is impaired in the slightest degree, *his throne must fall.*

A just God, cannot, therefore, demand more of one than of another, under similar circumstances, or give a rule for the government of his creatures, which may be evaded or departed from in the slightest degree with

impunity The perfections of God forbid the most distant hope that any one at all defective, can enter into heaven; every thing his Almighty hand has formed is perfect; it must necessarily be so,—the slightest shade of deformity, would cast a dark reflection on his character. Creation bears the impress of perfection in every part, where *sin* has not cast a shade of deformity over it. God created all things visible in six days; the work of redemption is by the same hand, and was a labour of thirty and three years. “Our salvation is of the Lord”—and must therefore be *perfect and entire, wanting nothing*.

“ ’Twas great to speak a world from naught,
 ’Twas greater to redeem.”

The *purity of God’s nature*, whose name is *holy*, renders it impracticable for those who do not reach the gospel standard, ever to appear in his presence. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all—

“ The sun itself is but his shade,
 Yet cheers both earth and sky.”

Light and darkness cannot commingle or dwell together. Every deviation from a perfect standard is darkness—it produces greater or less *shame*, an emotion which cannot be felt or known in heaven—for it would dishonour God our Saviour.

But one of the most cogent arguments to prove that we must be *all the gospel requires of us*, is drawn from a consideration of the

price that was paid for our redemption. “*Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST.*” All heaven had to give, was paid for our ransom; but if we may still remain deficient, it was a price too great! Such an idea would impugn not only the wisdom of God, but every attribute of his character. We must be like gold tried in the fire. The heathen king Belshazzar was weighed in the balance and found wanting; we pray that it may not be the unfortunate lot of any before whom Jesus Christ has been set forth crucified.

SECONDLY. EXAMINE *what the gospel requires of us; and HOW and WHEN its requisitions are to be attended to.*

The gospel or law of our Lord Jesus Christ is very concise, and may be expressed in one word, viz: *Love.* “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL thy heart, with ALL thy soul, with ALL thy mind.*” This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it—“*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*”* The apostle says, “*For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*”† Thus without obscurity and in a few words we have the gospel standard, delivered to us by the king himself. All who reach this divine standard and continue faithful until death, will receive a crown of righteousness, prepared for all those that love his

* Math. xxii. 37, 38, 39.

† Gal. v. 14.

appearing. This is the sum and substance of *christian perfection*; all who receive and obey this exalted and reasonable command, must be sanctified wholly—must be *pure in heart*. Where sin exists, God cannot dwell. Therefore, in order to *love* God with *ALL our heart*, with *ALL our soul*, with *ALL our mind*; and to *love our neighbour as ourselves*, it is necessary that every stain of sin should be washed away by the purifying blood of Jesus. The natural effect of sin wherever it exists, is to *darken—to harden*, and to *deform*. God is angry with the wicked every day—he cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; it necessarily follows that where sin exists, the love required of us cannot be found.

But HOW, and WHEN are these requisitions to be met? By *faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ. “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*”* To him that *believeth*, “*all things are possible.*”† If it is by faith we are to be made *whole*, and enabled to keep the commandments of Jesus Christ, the work may be accomplished *now*, as well as at any future period; yea, just as well as one day or one hour before our dissolution. *Faith* is a divine, a powerful, a victorious principle, and points not to some future period; it embraces, and receives God’s word when he says, “*now* is the accepted time, behold *now* is the day of salvation.”‡ If, indeed, we expect to realize the blessings of the gospel, which are present

* Acts xvi. 31.

† Mark ix. 23.

‡ 2 Cor. vi. 9

peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and a deliverance from sin, by our own works, our natural life would be a period too limited to effect the object—nay, eternity would be too short to accomplish the purpose. It is very certain that whatever the gospel requires of us, it requires *now*, and demands a faithful use and improvement of what we have, at every *present moment* throughout our lives. The language of scripture is—“*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*”—“*That which ye have already, hold fast till I come.*”* It does not say that it will bear with our remaining corruptions—with the remains of the carnal mind, until Jesus comes in death to deliver us from our troublesome, tyrannical foes, and make us perfect in God’s love. We have no promise for to-morrow in the Bible; there is no command given which suspends the obligation it imposes, until the succeeding day. The language of heaven, is, “*therefore be ye also READY; for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh.*”† If we could not be READY now, and could not continue to live in a state of preparation every day, and every hour, to meet the righteous Judge of all the earth, then did Christ speak unintelligibly and unwisely in the above passage, by demanding of us more than it would be possible for us to comply with. In the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, it is

* Rev. ii. 10. 25.

† Math. xxiv. 44.

said, the bridegroom made his appearance at midnight, and none but those who *were ready*, went in with him to the marriage supper; those who had their *preparation to make at that unseasonable hour*, were shut out.

That it is our exalted privilege, as well as our imperative duty, to be sanctified wholly, is perfectly consistent with reason, as well as scripture. Nothing that is unreasonable is required by heaven, or binding on mortals. Many things may be, and are far above our comprehension, but they are not incompatible with the true principles of reason, if they emanate from God. It would afford little comfort to the man of refined feelings, who was compelled to suspect that his wife's affection for him was not as pure and ardent as it should be, were she to say, "*I intend to love you fervently just before I die*," when all the other objects of her affections were about to be placed beyond her reach. To impose on a pure and holy God, what would be degrading and insulting to a worm of the earth, must be a crime of no ordinary magnitude. Suppose the profligate son should say to his honourable and affectionate father—"it is my intention to reform; a few days before my death, I intend to become as honest and virtuous as any man on earth!" Would this be an honourable sentiment, or at all calculated to soothe the sorrows of his honest, grieved, grey-headed sire?

Does the inspired writer say—"now are

*we the sons of God.”** And do we wound and insult our heavenly father by saying, at some *future period, we intend to become virtuous and honourable?* Are we recognized in the sacred scriptures, as the bride, the lamb’s wife? and do we say to our exalted bridegroom who is the king of heaven and earth—“*to-morrow—at some future period—or at furthest just before we die, when all other objects of pleasure are withering before our dim eyes, we will love thee supremely!*” Is not such procrastination a mockery and an insult to the holy one of Israel? Any thing short of a *present, and perfect* salvation, agreeably to the standard already cited, must be dishonourable to God, and degrading to man.

It is possible that many pious and sincere christians may dissent from this hypothesis, reasonable as it is—well, we will not fall out by the way. If we could believe that their views and sentiments, were more honourable to God, and consistent with reason and revelation, we would promptly embrace their opinions; as we cannot thus think, we would say to them do not condemn us; believe us we are true men and no spies; we are all brethren, and if you enjoy more of the smiles of heaven, and the consolations of the holy spirit than we do, we will not envy you, but rejoice in your prosperity and happiness. If we cannot see and think alike, still there may be a union of feeling—we may, nay,

we must, love one another, or we cannot be our heavenly father's children.

In accordance with the letter, and also the spirit of our text we now proceed—to *examine—not others, but ourselves.* We are not qualified to judge others; we cannot see their hearts; we are unacquainted with their motives, or with the peculiar circumstances in which they may be placed; therefore we should refrain from scanning their conduct or words with too much rigour, or passing a hasty sentence upon them; our divine master forbids this, and plainly directs us to remove the beam from our own, before we attempt to pluck the mote out of our neighbour's eye. The apostle to the Gentiles says, "*Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whomsoever thou art, that judgest; for thou that judgest another, doest the same things.*"* Were all mankind governed by this reasonable and honourable rule, the world would soon reflect the image of heaven from its tranquil bosom. Our Lord Jesus Christ said on a particular occasion, "*let him that is without sin cast the first stone.*" Were we all to observe this excellent rule—were we never to reflect on others until we ourselves were faultless, there would very soon be universal *peace* in the christian church. Reader—fellow traveller to the bar of God, observe this rule faithfully, and you will do more than Alexander or Cæsar,—you will,

through divine assistance, soon conquer your own corrupt, depraved heart.

Whatever sentiments we have already advanced, or may propose on the present occasion, we assure our respectable readers, that it is not our intention to aim a poisoned arrow of prejudice or malice, against their name or party, or private sentiments. We will not intentionally or knowingly violate our good master's rule—*“let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.”* We are all strangers in a strange land, and equally dependent on our God, and one another. *“Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.”* To our own master we must stand or fall. Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest any of us should come short of it.

In investigating *ourselves* we will,

1. EXAMINE OUR FAITH. Without *faith* it is impossible to please God. FAITH is the main spring of the christian's spiritual life; if this be weak, the whole system will be enervated and disordered. So very important is this principle, that our salvation or damnation is suspended on the exercise of it. *“He that BELIEVETH and is baptized shall be saved; but he that BELIEVETH not shall be damned.”** When the trembling jailor cried out in the bitterness of his soul, *“what must I do to be saved?”* the reply was, *“BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be*

saved.”* Again—“*To him that BELIEVETH, all things are possible.*”† “*According to your FAITH, so be it unto you.*”‡ “*Thy FAITH hath saved thee, go in peace.*”§ To mention every passage of God’s word which speaks of the necessity and importance of FAITH, we should have to transcribe a large part of the New Testament. *Unbelief*, hardens the heart, dishonours God, and renders man miserable. Christ says, “*if ye have FAITH as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*”|| The proper exercise of *faith*, throws a shield of defence around the christian, which renders him invulnerable to all the fiery darts of his combined enemies, and arms him with a divine energy which overcometh the world. Even in the jaws of dissolving nature, it gives him the victory over the king of terrors, and enables him confidently to sing,

“Yet these, new rising from the tomb,
With lustre brighter far shall shine,
Revive with ever-during bloom,
Safe from diseases and decline.”

It is thought by many, that as FAITH is the gift of God, we cannot exercise it at our own discretion—that an immediate, and peculiar power, or permission must be given by Almighty God, before we can *believe*. This

* Acts xvi. 30, 31.

† Mark ix. 23.

‡ Math. ix. 29.

§ Luke vii. 50.

|| Math. xvii. 20.

opinion is no doubt correct; but like many other valuable truths, it has been distorted, and wrested to destructive purposes, and thus caused the ruin of many immortal souls.

Although there is but one passage in the sacred scriptures, which says that *faith is the gift of God*, and that by no means express; (*"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,"**) yet I fully believe it to be true. Nay, further, I believe there is nothing *good* in this evil world, whether it pertains to men or things, but what is the *gift of God*. Good cannot proceed from an evil source; neither can evil emanate from a good source; therefore no good thing, no not even one good thought, can proceed from our fallen, corrupt nature, or from the devil; it must necessarily emanate from God through Jesus Christ. I can no more raise my hand to my head of my own independent or inherent power, than I can move a mountain. It is by the power of Almighty God alone, that we can act, or speak, or think. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." FAITH is a principle of the utmost importance to every christian—without it, we can enjoy no real peace or happiness—without it, no act of devotion can be pleasing or acceptable in the sight of God; it must therefore be the *gift of God*. But how does he impart this divine principle to frail mortals? *Arbitrarily*

* Ephas. ii. 5. 8.

or freely? He gives us power to speak, but he does not speak for us. He gives us ground, but he does not cultivate it for us. To understand the word of God correctly, his character, the relation we bear to him, and our present condition, must be duly considered. It is unwise and uncharitable to insist on the rigid application of any general principle, or the exclusive interpretation of any expression, which will bear two or more rational constructions. You say, "FAITH is the gift of God, and you can no more *believe* of yourself than you can make a world." This is all true; but suppose I say, *grain is the gift of God*, and I can no more make a grain of corn of myself, than I can make a world. Now, because this is true, must I wait until God makes windows in heaven, and pours down grain or bread into my lap? He can do so with as much ease, as he can make it grow in the ground—but as sure as I wait for this to be done, myself and my little ones will perish for want of bread.

Although God alone can make grain, yet the most ignorant servant on our farm knows how it is to be obtained. God never fails to bless the honest exertions of man to do good for himself. To suppose that God imparts *faith*, or the power to *believe*, to his dependent creature man, in a different way from that in which he bestows all his other good gifts, so that we cannot employ it as we do our words, or our physical powers, is to cast

a shade of deformity over his character, and impute to him conduct which would darken or dishonour the name or reputation of any man on earth, the untaught tenant of the wilderness not excepted. To illustrate this sentiment let us suppose the case of A and B, neither of whom are able to speak or think, or move, without the power of God. A is a serious person and wishes to embrace religion, but he is under an impression, that as *faith is the gift of God*, he cannot exercise it until God imparts it in some peculiar way to him; he waits patiently, and as he conscientiously believes honourably, until God communicates this necessary gift; he goes mourning for days and months and years, because a merciful God who has called him to forsake his sins, and come to the fountain opened to the house of David for sin and pollution; whose spirit has been striving with his spirit for years, does not according to his mistaken impression give him faith to believe on Jesus Christ to the salvation of his soul.

B neither fears God nor regards man; he repairs to a sink of iniquity—drinks himself drunk—wallows in his shame—degrades the man below the beast—blasphemes the worthy name of God, and ultimately commits murder. Each of these men derives all his vital energy from that God who declares he is angry with the wicked every day, and stands at the door of the sinner's heart knocking for entrance; and yet admitting the premises, he

gives B power to drink, and blaspheme his name, and to commit murder, but does not give A power to believe that he may become a holy, happy and honourable child of God!! Such a supposition is too absurd for serious thought. The righteous judge of all the earth acts righteously. Man *may*, and can *believe*, and God is just and righteous altogether when he says—“*he that believeth not shall be damned.*” Man has imparted to him not only power to believe freely, but his faith may rise to a high and honourable degree of perfection. We need only call your attention to a case in point, which will prove this important fact to the satisfaction of every reflecting mind. The President and Directors of the United States’ Bank promise to pay me fifty dollars on demand, and write this promise down on a very flimsy piece of paper; I receive it, and so *strong and perfect* is my *faith* or confidence in their word, that I unequivocally declare, I have fifty dollars in my possession, *nor is there one doubt on my mind respecting the fact*—If I had the gold or silver in my hand, I could not be more confident, than I am with this promise in my possession. I exercise this *faith*, or confidence too, in frail, dying men, who are subject to various contingencies, on every feature of whose existence vanity and uncertainty is written. But when we are called on to believe in, and rely on the word of Almighty God who cannot lie—who has all power in heaven and on

earth—(the gold and silver all belong to him)—the immutable and eternal Jehovah, who is seated on the throne of heaven, and occupies the earth as his footstool, and who will forever sway the sceptre of eternity; whose love and tender mercy is as boundless as his power: when he speaks, and makes us a *promise*, and records it in a sure and honourable place; when he gives us *his bond*, and *endorses it with his oath*, and *seals it with his own son's blood*, and delivers it in the presence of a cloud of honourable witnesses—we begin to make excuses—“*we cannot believe—faith is the gift of God; therefore we cannot exercise it—we are very frail—we must doubt—it is our nature.*” Do we not by such dishonourable conduct and shameful unbelief, write our own condemnation, in characters of blood? To believe the word of the best man on earth, or of any association of men however honourable and dignified they may be, more firmly than we believe the word of Almighty God, must be highly offensive in his sight, and insulting to his character; but to believe the word of the most ignorant servant on our land more sacredly than the word of God, must be a crime of the deepest dye, and darkest hue; and yet many of us are guilty of such conduct and seldom think of it. God's word declares in the most positive and unequivocal manner, that he will come to demand our souls of us at an unexpected hour—that he will come as a thief in the night: conse-

quently he may come, and we should look for his appearing *this night*. He also commands us to be *ready*, and *prepared* to receive him.* Notwithstanding this, we lie down to take our rest, *carelessly* and *contentedly*, *conscious that we are not prepared to hear the solemn summons to the bar of God*. But let one of our poor, ignorant servants, inform us that he has heard two men plotting together to burn down our house in the course of a month—and that they had not determined on the night.—Would any of us lie down carelessly and composedly, without placing a watch, or making due preparation to ward off the danger?

We believe there is not one in a thousand, who would be so insensible and foolish as to risk such a danger without preparation or concern about it. And yet the mighty God daily witnesses his holy word trampled on, and almost entirely disregarded, although the consequences are of infinitely greater moment to us! How can we meet him at his holy bar? Our servant's word is respected, and acted upon, whilst the word of God is treated with the most profound contempt and indifference!

O let us wake up to a sense of our real condition and danger. We must all stand before the judgement seat of Christ; then shall we learn that *God's word, and every iota of it will stand firm as the pillars of eternity*.

* Matth. xxiv. 44. Mark xiii. 36, 37.

Who of us now believe the words of our divine Redeemer unwaveringly and universally? It will not do to doubt—"For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed; for let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord; a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."* We must not *disbelieve* one word of all that Jesus Christ has commanded or promised, else we make him a *liar*—Who, O who of us believe unwaveringly, that for every idle word we speak, we shall have to give an account thereof in the day of Judgment. Who of us *really* believe that Jesus Christ is every moment present, and hears every word we speak? We sometimes think, and say, we have not power at all times to regulate our words, and govern our passions; but this excuse will only be a fig-leaf covering; the real cause why we cannot regulate and govern our words and passions, is our *unbelief*—we do not *believe* what God has said of himself, or of us. In the presence of *great* and *wise*, and *good* men, we can, and do refrain from anger or levity; nor do we say one word which we fear will displease them, while we are in their company. Under this view of the subject our hearts must in many instances condemn us. *We can, and do honour man, who is a worm*; but alas! how greatly do we dishonour that God whose eyes are every where beholding the evil, and

* James i. 6, 7, 8

the good. We forget that he is present, and thus grieve his Holy Spirit.

Sin and unbelief, caused the hands of the meek and lowly Redeemer to be torn by the nails which were mercilessly and maliciously driven through them by Jewish mercenaries; but do not we pierce the side, and wound those hands afresh, by our unbelief and our indifference? Will not the Jewish soldiers mock us, and triumph over us in eternity?—they crucified the Saviour ignorantly; they knew not what they did; we crucify him afresh daily, by our sin and *unbelief*; by honouring man more than God—and we do it *wilfully* and *knowingly*. “But how shall I possess, and be able to exercise that faith which is strong and active, which is not dead but alive, and which constantly exerts its gracious influence over all my words and works?” I hear one anxiously inquire. Another says, “I have been for years praying ‘Lord increase my *faith*,’ and yet my wavering unbelief dishonours God, and destroys my real peace of mind; I weep over my leanness, and the *weakness* of my *faith* daily—O tell me how I may be strong in *faith* like Abraham, and then will I also glorify the God of Israel.” We presume you are honest in your inquiries, and desires, and therefore shall not attempt to amuse or bewilder your minds by prying into the mysteries of heaven. But as we would direct the honest man whose children were crying for bread, so will we direct

you He eagerly inquires, "how shall I procure bread for them? Alas, he says, I know not how to make one grain of corn, I know not the particles of which it is composed; I am ignorant; I am weak, my little ones must starve,"—not so, we reply—and simply point the good man to the means to be used—directing him to use them honestly and his object will be gained.

Here, however, his own wisdom and greatness must be laid in the grave—it is after all he can do, *the free and unmerited gift of God*. So of *faith—self* must be slain; your wisdom and greatness must be buried in the grave of oblivion—"dust thou art, and unto dust thou must return." Only use the means, and use them honestly, and faithfully, and the same almighty and merciful hand which is opened to feed the young ravens when they cry, and supplies all the real wants of the little children, and their grey headed fathers, will inspire you with *all conquering faith*. The inspired writer says, "*show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*"* Then to ascertain how we are to gain this important principle, or at least to discover why our *faith* is so weak, we will proceed to

Examine our practice—or obedience,—

We can refer to no instance recorded in

* James ii. 18. 26.

God's word where *faith* rose so high, and shone so bright, and where as much has been said by Almighty God in honour of this principle, as in the case of Abraham offering up his son Isaac; and in no instance can we advert to a more perfect and astonishing display of willing and implicit obedience to God's *law*—to his holy command. When God called Saul of Tarsus in his mad career, *immediately* he conferred not with flesh and blood, but honestly inquired—"Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" He *obeyed* promptly and faithfully, and became able to say in view of the closing scene of life—"I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, *I have kept the faith*; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them who also love his appearing."* This eminent servant of God when he was called, had only the pride of life and the prejudices of education to meet and overcome. But Abraham in obeying the command of his God had all the finer feelings of parental affection to contend with—these were powerful and trying in the highest degree; but God's word was dearer to him than an only son, or even his own life. Hence he staggered not at the promise of God through *unbelief*; but was *strong in*

* 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

faith giving glory to God. *He acted—he* overcame nature's loudest entreaties—he sought for no subterfuge—he inquired for no reasons, why or wherefore? “It is God, let him do what seemeth good in his sight.” There was no rebellion in his words, or disobedience in his works. He triumphed, and was called *the friend of God*. Go, inquiring, wavering christian and do thou likewise. Our divine master says “if ye *love* me keep my commandments.” We cannot possibly suppose he means that we should keep them partially, or as it may be convenient; for his word declares, “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point he is guilty of all.”* The man who kills a child, is as completely a murderer, as if he had destroyed fifty grown persons. Do not be alarmed; we do not intend to say that men can work themselves to heaven by the deeds of the law. Not so; we are not under the law, but under grace; but shall we therefore sin? God forbid. The law was not made for a good man; he lives above its censure: the law has no claim upon him; he fears it not; he encroaches not upon its boundaries; he intrudes not upon its forbidden soil. But in every well regulated kingdom or government on earth, there is and must be laws to regulate its concerns, and maintain peace and harmony among the people; nor would any good man live in a country where there was

* James ii. 10.

no law, though he lives above its reach himself. Many believe that the obligation to obey the moral law delivered to Moses, is done away in Christ, because it is said, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."* Were we to admit for argument sake, that the gospel delivers us from the yoke of the law contained in the ten commandments received by the servant of God on Mount Sinai, we should gain nothing by it, at least no indulgence to our fallen nature. The *law* says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery"—but the gospel says—"Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." The *law* says "Thou shalt not kill"—the gospel says "He that hateth his brother is a murderer."† The apostle to the Gentiles asks, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law."‡ Although the tables on which the *law* was originally inscribed by the finger of God, were broken to pieces—the same *law* was written on the second tables. Though the former dispensation is broken to pieces, and has passed away, yet the author of our salvation remains unchanged, consequently the moral law is now substantially the same. Through Christ we are delivered from its *curse*—its condemnatory sentence; none but Christ could have delivered us from the death it denounced

* Rom. x. 4.

† 1 John iii. 15.

‡ Rom. ii. 31.

against the human family. From its purity and honour, no good man wishes to be delivered. It is *holy, just, and good*.

There has recently been considerable controversy in the christian world respecting the Sabbath day; whether its obligations are binding on christians, or not. It is incorporated in the decalogue, and forms one of the commandments delivered to Moses, by the hand of God himself; what therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Christ's kingdom and church, is of a spiritual character. His gospel is admirably adapted to the wants and conditions of all mankind, and must ultimately prevail, and be established in every clime and country on earth; therefore the sabbath day has been wisely passed over in the New Testament, almost in silence, lest vain jangling and idle controversy about forms and shadows, should engage the minds and engross the time of dying mortals. The customs of our fathers handed down from the apostles, and the plain inferences from the old to the new testament, are sufficient to establish fully the right of christians, to enjoy the privilege of one day in each week, devoted to worship and to rest. The inhabitants of the frozen regions, and of the torrid zone, may equally claim and enjoy the unspeakable blessing, of devoting one seventh part of their time exclusively to the service of the Lord, and whether it be the **first**, or the seventh day of the week, either

will meet the spirit of God's commandment. God is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and truth. It is very much to be feared that those who cavil about the Sabbath day, and are unwilling to submit to its requisitions, unless there is indubitable authority for binding it around their necks with a chain of necessity, know very little of God's holy law, which is *love*, or of his worship, which is spiritual in its nature, and delightful in its operation. The Sabbath is called the *Lord's day*;^{*} a day which he appropriates, and appoints for poor dependent mortals to meet with him and adore him in his earthly sanctuary. A day on which he condescends in boundless mercy to visit us at our own residence. It is an exalted source of pleasure to all honourable social hearts, to receive their friends at their houses, nor is there an occurrence in the devious ways of man, which is much more painful and mortifying to our feelings, than to be received with cold civility or indifference, by our friends, when we visit them. Suppose a distant friend to whom I was under great obligations for past favours, were to send me word, at much trouble and expense, that on a certain day he would be at my house, to pay me a friendly visit—and that when he reached my door he were met by a servant who should inform him that “his master was from home, but would return in the evening, or in the morning; and invite him

* Rev. i. 10.

to walk in and take a seat, or request him to call again?" My astonished friend inquires of the servant, "has your master received a letter from me within a few weeks past? surely my letter could not have reached him." The servant carelessly informs him that his letter was duly received; and that his master was perfectly apprized of his intended visit. My friend then asks, "are any of his friends dead, or very ill; where has he gone? did he leave no word for me?" My servant replies, "there are none of his friends sick or dead; he has gone to a party given by Col. B. and left word if you came, that you must make yourself at home until he returns." What would my respectable and kind friend think, or how would he feel? My friendly reader's imagination can realize his feelings better than they can be expressed. Vary the case a little; suppose my distant friend finds me at home: I receive him in a cold, formal manner, without pressing his hand as a token of respect and affection; I ask him formally to take a seat, but observe a cold reserve towards him, and only answer negatively or affirmatively to his friendly interrogatories; very soon a neighbour calls in, I give him my hand, and express great pleasure at his visit; inquire affectionately about the concerns and news of the day; my countenance is lighted up with a smile of delight while I converse with my neighbour, who is equally pleased with his reception and company.

Would my friend from a distance think he had the uppermost seat in my affections, or that I wished it to be so; or even that he was treated with common politeness? Let us now *examine* candidly how we receive the King of Glory; the Prince of Peace; the rightful Sovereign of heaven and earth; who has freely given us every crumb of bread, and drop of water, we have ever enjoyed on earth; he is *our best and only friend*. He sends his angels to encamp around our beds by night, to preserve us from the pestilence which walketh in darkness, and guards us by day from dangers and death. He has apprized us of his approach; on a particular day he will visit us at our humble residence; every seventh day he condescends to call on us. One of God's servants gives directions to a people far less honoured and favoured than we are, how they should regard and keep this *holy day*. "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing *thy pleasure* on my holy day; and call the *sabbath a delight*, the *holy of the Lord*, *honourable*, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor *finding thine own pleasure*, nor *speaking thine own words*; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord: and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

Were the Jews to receive this holy day,

* Isaiah lviii. 13, 14.

with its privileges only half developed to them, with *delight, gratitude, and joy*? And are we under the meridian blaze of the gospel light, to receive it with cold indifference, and even to contend that *it is not binding on us*? O Lord God of hosts, raise not thine omnipotent arm to blot us from thy book; do not banish us from thy presence, and the glory of thy power for ever. I blush, and hang my head, when I consider the superabounding blessings we enjoy as a christian people, and see how we pollute the holy sabbath. Wagons and stages, and steam-boats, are not even retarded, but move with increased activity, and noise, on this sacred day. Taverns are frequented; stores half open; the traveller pursues his journey, &c. Surely there is a cloud of vengeance lowering over our unsuspecting guilty heads. But our intention on the present occasion is not so much to investigate the conduct of open, daring, hardened sinners, as to *examine* the state and character of those who profess to be friends and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. How do we receive the heavenly guest, on his distinguished holy Sabbath day? Are we not frequently from home at Col. B's when he comes? I mean, are we not frequently occupied more about the concerns of this world than those of heaven? Are not our minds often *absent* from spiritual and divine things, and employed about the cares of life, and the benefits of this dis-

ordered world? If so, then do we treat Christ our king, worse than I did my friend from a distance, when I visited Col. B. and left the servant to receive him at my empty, gloomy house. Do we not frequently neglect our Bible, and family altar, and indulge in conversation with our friends, and neighbours, about temporal concerns, on the sabbath day? If so, we smile on others, and frown on Jesus Christ; we treat our best and only friend, with silent contempt, while others receive our most polite and friendly attention. If we respect, and love the Lord Jesus, we will take a peculiar delight, on his day to speak such words and do such things only, as will please him. When our respected and beloved friend is in our house, we do not allow him to hear us complain, or scold, or speak unadvisedly, with our lips—we will not allow him to be left alone for one moment; that would be impolite and offensive. But are we as careful to honour our heavenly guest? It is of the utmost importance to scan our movements and hearts, with the strictest scrutiny, in such an important and interesting case. Should our friend suspect that his company was not agreeable, which he would soon discover by our conduct, he would very soon leave us to enjoy the society and conversation of those who were more agreeable to us. And do we vainly suppose that Jesus Christ, the king immortal, invisible, only living God, will

be deceived by our ingenuity, or receive our cold reluctant services with approbation? Not so—"God is not *mocked*—whatsoever we sow, that shall we also reap. If we sow to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption."

If we respect and *love* the Lord Jesus Christ, we will delight to keep his day *holy*; we will spend it in reading his word, in prayer, in praise, &c. We will honour him, by instructing our children and servants. If we neglect carefully to restrain, and instruct our children, and *servants*, on the Sabbath day, it is reasonable to say, *we shall be accountable for their sins*. Nothing should turn our attention from the holy duties and privileges of the christian Sabbath. If our neighbour calls in, we should affectionately and properly invite him to join in our holy and delightful employment. But does not the King sometimes see us repair to his sanctuary to worship and meet with him there, while our servants are at home labouring over the fire, preparing a rich repast for us, and our own worshipping friends? In the great day, when the righteous judge asks our servants, why did you not visit me at my sanctuary, on my holy day, or hold converse with me on your knees at home? Will not our servants turn their eyes of horror to us and say, we were labouring for the comfortable, if not sumptuous accommodation of our masters? Will we say it was not pleasant to

our taste, or polite to our rich friends, to have cold fare every seventh day—while we read in an open book in the judge's right hand, "They that honour me, I will honour, but they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed. *Except ye deny yourself, and take up your cross daily, and follow me, ye cannot be my disciples.*—"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy?"

If we visit on the Lord's day, except to see the sick, or those who are afflicted in mind, we leave our Redeemer at home, *and treat him with profound contempt.*

Let us *examine* our hearts, in reference to this day.—Religion is seated in the heart, and if our affections are not fully placed on God, all our efforts to keep his holy day sacred, or to comply with any of God's commandments, will avail us nothing.—If we love the world, or any of its alluring charms, farewell to the joys of heaven forever. Suppose the President of the United States was to issue a proclamation, offering to every one who would observe the fourth commandment for one year, fifty thousand dollars—do we honestly and conscientiously believe, we should be as careless under such circumstances, as we are now? Would there be the sound of an axe heard on our farms on that day? Would we even wish the servants to labour on that day, in cooking over the fire? Perhaps we would then hear our good christian friends say, "I can live very well on

cold fare, every Sunday, for one year—it will soon be past, and then I will be comfortable for life.” Now, if we would be more careful, and keep the day more strict, to gain the fifty thousand dollars, or fifty million of dollars, than we are under present circumstances, we have no hope of heaven. It would afford unequivocal evidence, that we preferred money to the authority of God’s word, or the glories of heaven. The word of eternal truth expressly declares, “*if any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.*” Narrow is the way, and straight is the gate which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Not long since, I spent the close of the week with an old and respectable member of the church. In the morning almost the first sound that reached my ears, was the axe. I reasoned with my kind friend on the impropriety, and awful consequences of such conduct. He frankly acknowledged his faults; but alledged that his servants were to blame—he could not control them—It was an express violation of his orders. As he could not prevent it, he supposed he was innocent himself. Do you think said I, if there was a fine of ten dollars only, for cutting wood on the Sabbath day, that those ungovernable servants would be guilty of a violation of that law, and compel you to pay the ten dollars every week? He promptly and frankly replied, no sir, I believe it would not be the

case. Under such circumstances, it requires no supernatural aid to see, and know *why our faith is weak*. We cannot believe with unwavering confidence uniformly, because our hearts condemn us, and God is greater than our hearts, and must in the judgement day say, “depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” The Sabbath day must not be considered as a Jewish ritual, or as a burden bound on our shoulders by the hand of oppression. We should view, and revere it as a day of distinguished privilege and honour—a day on which the high and lofty one, who inhabits eternity, becomes our guest in a peculiar manner. But if our faith is too weak to realize his presence, then must our hope be dim, and our charity cold and heartless indeed. We should make one unbending rule respecting the Sabbath day—viz: to honour the Lord Jesus Christ, and respect his character and claims, more than those of any human being on earth. We should frequently inquire on *his holy day*—if such a pious respected friend was with me—was on a visit to my family, would I be as careless in his presence as I have been this day, and talk as idly as I have done? Among the many laudable institutions and abounding blessings of the present day, we enjoy very few better than Sabbath schools; but will they not rise in judgement and condemn us? Ought not every christian man’s house to be a Sab

bath school? God has appointed the parents the legitimate guardians of their children—it is their indispensable duty to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Many of us neglect this momentous duty, and turn our children over to strangers. Do others indeed love our children better than we do ourselves? There is something awfully wrong in the parents' department.

These remarks are not made to discourage Sabbath schools, but to waken up reflection among parents, and if possible to provoke them to greater zeal and care in the discharge of their responsible duties. Remember parents, you must meet your children at the bar of God; act with a wise reference to that day, every day and every hour you live—the next hour may be your last on earth.

A part of the christian character will now be *examined*, about which no controversy can exist—respecting which there will be no discord in our views or sentiments. There can be but one opinion with regard to the administration of *justice*. In the exercise of *faith*, or the observance of the *Sabbath day*, a definite line cannot well be drawn by any one for another; circumstances may materially influence our feelings and conduct; the motive in many instances must decide the merit of the act. But not so in the administration of *justice*; here no compromise can be made—no circumstances or exigencies can be plead in extenuation of the slightest

wilful encroachment on the definite boundaries of this divine principle. It will admit of no temporizing doctrine; no medium can be found between the two extremes; we must array ourselves on one side or the other. The moment a man steals, or takes by *force* or *fraud*, *one cent* from another, to which he is not clearly entitled, he becomes a dishonest—and *unjust* person, as completely as if he had stolen a thousand dollars. Our Saviour varies the phraseology or manner of expressing this important principle, and declares that it includes or embraces the whole law. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do you even so to them, for this is the law, and the prophets.* If we withhold from others that which they are justly entitled to, and which belongs of right to them, we are as certainly *unjust* as if we had stolen or taken their property by force or fraud. If we hold in our possession money, or property which belongs to another person, we are in justice bound to make for it a suitable return, or compensation. It cannot be denied, that all we have in this world belongs of right to Almighty God; our souls—our bodies—our time—our talents—our property and our money, are all his. Can we now appeal to the eternal and inflexible principles of *justice*, and say we have rendered unto God, the things which are God's? Can we even turn

* Matth. vii. 12.

to our fellow mortals, and without fear of contradiction in the presence of the righteous judge of all the earth, say, “we have done unto all, as we would that they should do unto us?” If we cannot, we have no well grounded claim upon the mercy of God, or hope of entering into heaven. Many christians are under an impression that we are not rigidly bound to keep the law of God, which requires strict *justice* in all things, because we are under *grace*—they believe we may deviate from the high and holy principles of *justice* and righteousness through the infirmities of our fallen nature—that the Redeemer’s merits will be applied, and the Father will accept us for Christ’s sake, though we do depart from the standard of strict justice. We know it requires the merits of Christ’s blood to atone for the least offence, and that through him alone, we can receive mercy and pardon for sin, however light its complexion, and if his pardoning mercy is not extended to every offence, eternal ruin must ensue. But to say that Christ’s grace is not sufficient to preserve us from the slightest stain of sin, is greatly to undervalue the virtue of his atonement. We speak not of the real, and innocent infirmities of our fallen nature, such as a defective memory—a deficiency of knowledge—an inability to convince sinners of the danger of their destructive ways—or to serve God, and the cause of his church on earth more efficiently, &c

Even for these innocent infirmities Christ's atoning merits are indispensably necessary—God looks through the Son of his love with infinite compassion, and accepts us with infirmities for Christ's sake, as the Father looks with sympathetic affection on his child who may happen to be defective in his mental or physical powers.

To suppose that an honest father could see his child depart from the most exalted principles of virtue and honour, without painful displeasure, is not reasonable. It is equally unreasonable to think that the dignity and honour of any parent could render innocent, and inoffensive the crimes of his child. Were the child to defraud his neighbour, or commit murder, or depart from the principle of truth—are we to be informed that his character is not sullied—must we trust him as an honourable man, and receive him as our bosom friend and companion, because his father has taken him out of jail, and wiped away his past guilt, and received him into his own house and favour—must we admit that the exalted character of the father neutralizes and purifies all his son's deeds of infamy?—We would spurn such doctrine from us with contempt. The father might have power to compel us to treat his son with politeness; but, in our hearts we could not respect him; nor would the exercise of such authority exalt the father's character in our estimation. Christ says, “my grace is suffi

cient for thee,"—not to conceal, or apologize for our sins, but to blot them out, to wash them away, and to preserve us every moment from evil. It may be said by some, that the above declaration of Christ refers immediately to *sin*; that his grace is sufficient to render us innocent and acceptable to the Father, though we do depart from his holy commandments. It was, say they, an answer to Paul's prayer, to have the thorn in his flesh taken away, which thorn they suppose must mean *sin*. If so, Paul's views and feelings must have been greatly warped from the christian standard; when he heard the Lord's answer to his prayer, he gloried in the peculiar visitation whatever it was; had it been sin, we say unequivocally he could not have rejoiced in it, as a servant of the most high God. It must be admitted by every rational christian, that we *can* be saved from *all sin now*, and preserved through life from its influence, or *we cannot; if we cannot, the work of redemption is defective*—If *we can, the point is decided*, we need not differ about shadows.

In examining the principle of *justice*, I inquire, have we improved our time, and our talents, as God the legitimate proprietor of them has directed? As parents, can we conscientiously say that we have trained up our children in the way they should go? God in mercy gave them to us, and we should in justice, render them back to him carefully

and faithfully improved, to the best of our abilities.

As masters, can we meet our servants at the just bar of God, and say we have faithfully observed the golden rule towards them in all things; have we done to them as we would that they should have done unto us? If we cannot, there is no hope of heaven for us.

A thought may here be suggested worthy of the serious consideration of every master. Our great Creator has given us nothing in vain; every talent he has imparted to us, we are in justice bound to improve; the case of the slothful servant related, Matth. xxv. 24 to 30, will illustrate this thought. He had neglected to improve his talent; it was not said that he had abused it, but carelessly and unjustly neglected its improvement. He was by the righteous judge condemned and sentenced to be cast into utter darkness. On the same principle must the judge proceed with all his subjects, or he himself would cease to be just. Our servants have received in common with us, a capacity to read, write, count, &c. In the great judgement day, when Christ demands of them the reason why this talent was not improved, what will they say? Will not we, as their *masters*, turn our eyes to the foundation of God's throne, and see *justice* inscribed there;—that is sufficient;—our consciences and our judgement too, tell us what they will say? We should not daub ourselves with untempered mortar, by saying

we treat them well—we feed and clothe them plentifully—for we do the same by our domestic animals. What do we do for the immortal part which must shine, and sing in heaven, or wail and burn in hell forever? The immutable principles of *justice* must be observed as carefully by the servants as the master, for if they are not as faithful, and obedient behind their master's back as before his eyes—if they are not uniformly submissive, and obedient, and regardful of their master's interest, they must be cast off forever.

As ministers of the Gospel, have we been just and impartial to all, to the rich and the poor, the bond and the free? Our divine Master says expressly—to the poor, the Gospel is preached. Have we visited them in their cottages, and taught from house to house, the true principles of the cross of Jesus Christ? If we have received a treasure, and a commission to distribute it equally and impartially among all our father's children—and have favoured the wise and the rich with our company and instruction, more than the poor and the needy, can the righteous judge say, well done good and faithful servants? God's ministering servants are placed in a conspicuous, and awfully responsible station; and if we are not just and faithful, greater will be our punishment than that of any other class of the human family. All mankind, but particularly ministers are stewards. Let a man so account of us as of the ministers

of Christ, and *stewards* of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in *stewards* that a man be found faithful.* “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same, one to another, as good *stewards* of the manifold grace of God.”†

If the Lord Jehovah has honoured us so far as to place us as stewards over his household and treasure here on earth, it is all important that we should be *just* in the discharge of the duties enjoined on us. It cannot in justice be said that any thing which we possess is our own. We serve a good master, who allows us freely and fully every thing necessary for life and godliness—no good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. But reason and righteousness teach us that, as faithful stewards, we cannot waste any part of our great employer's goods, or property, or money, or time, and be *just* and pleasing in his sight. Were a man who is worth millions of money, to see his steward casting his money, or grain into the fire, or river, he would instantly discharge him in disgrace. Can we honestly say that we have not expended *one cent* (*he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much*) in the gratification of our fallen corrupt passions and appetites—in a word, that we have not expended one cent for any thing superfluous or unnecessary? If we cannot, then have we thrown our Master's money into the fire or

* 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

† 1 Peter iv. 10.

the river before his eyes. When our divine employer, fed five thousand with a few loaves, he commanded his disciples to gather up the fragments that nothing might be lost—this injunction or command extends to his servants or stewards to the latest ages; the reasonable lesson which it inculcates, is this, you are unable to make one crumb, therefore do not waste one. Let us *examine our houses*. God designs and intends, that we should have a resting place, where we may be protected from the inclemency of the weather, while we are travelling through the wilderness to our possessions on the other side of Jordan—this is enough—rational beings should want no more, and any thing superfluous about our houses, which is only calculated to please the eye, is more than enough, and whatever it cost, we have thrown that amount into the fire or river. O how careful ought we to be in this investigation, when we know our Master's eye is upon all our movements. His poor distressed children are crying to him for bread, while we are throwing his money into the fire—this is no ordinary crime. Our *furniture*, is there nothing superfluous here? Is the table, or chair, or sideboard, to look at? Every man of good sense knows that a pine or oak, or walnut table, would answer every beneficial purpose, of the elegant mahogany one which cost three times as much money. While Christ stands in the streets, or at your door, in the person of the

poor distressed beggar, (instance Lazarus) can he pronounce *it just and honourable* in you to put your hand into his desk, and take his money to purchase clothes, mirrors or chairs, and tables, when many of his children are suffering for the necessities of life. Our dress—can we say that not one cent has been taken from our master's coffers to put on our dying persons to please the eye? Say not that this is too little a thing for the servant of God—religion does not consist in meats and drinks, &c. It is a principle we are contending for, and our reasoning is either true or false. We do not inquire how little or how much the culprit stole; one cent, turns the scale, and marks his character, with the broad black stain of injustice, as completely as if he had robbed a Bank. Every man will be weighed in the balances of eternal unyielding justice; nor can we be too careful in adjusting the scales, and trying ourselves faithfully even now. It will be too late to correct errors, in the final day of decision. *Small things*, are generally overlooked, or viewed without much concern. The boundary line between *justice* and *injustice* is very narrow; yet it is clear and definite, and we who are, *or ought to be*, the lights in a dark and benighted land, should point it out with great precision. The young man who came to our Lord to inquire of him what he should do to inherit eternal life, had done much—he had done what many of us have declared

openly we cannot do—he *had kept the law*; but to sell all—to be poor and despised—to meet the frowns of the proud sons of night, to this he could not descend; these things were too little for an honourable Jew—for a wealthy Pharisee. We, too, can do much for the interest of the church—we give freely and bountifully—We labour much, and make great efforts to promote the Redeemer’s kingdom on earth—but to sell all—to come out from among the sons of Belial—to put away every *little unnecessary* thing, and those, too, the very things which make us appear respectable in the eyes of the wicked—O how hard! Were the amputating knife faithfully applied, we awfully fear the Ephesian craftsman’s cry, would soon be heard even in the heart of Zion. Those *little things*—those excesses and indulgencies, are the little foxes that eat up the grapes—*Those little things*, enfeeble and destroy our *faith*. We pray, “*Lord increase our faith*;” but while our hands are stained with the blood of in justice, we shall pray in vain.

Our divine Master has given us another commandment of infinite importance. “Be ye therefore *merciful*, as your Father also is merciful.”*

This divine principle is spoken of in the most exalted terms in the holy scriptures. “With the merciful, thou wilt show thyself merciful.”† “Let not *mercy* and truth for-

* Luke vi. 36.

† Ps. xviii. 25.

sake thee: bind them about thy neck, write them upon the table of thine heart; so shalt thou find *favour*, and good understanding, in the sight of God and man.”* “He hath showed thee, O man! what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do *justly* and to *love mercy*, and to walk humbly with thy God.”† “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”‡ “Let there be none to extend *mercy* unto him; neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children, because that he remembered not to show *mercy*; but persecuted the poor and needy man.”§ “For he shall have *judgement without mercy*, that hath showed no *mercy*, and mercy rejoiceth against judgement.”|| The wise and inspired King of Israel, declares that, “*The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.*”¶ If this is correct, and reason confirms the declaration, how deplorable—how desperate is the character and condition of the *wilful* sinner; and in this day of abounding light, I know not how any man can sin ignorantly. Some good natured sinners may think *they* are not *cruel*; they feel for, and put forth their hand to alleviate the woes and miseries of suffering humanity, whenever the cry of distress is heard. Allow me to ask the inoffensive, and well disposed sinner, who would be insulted if he were called cruel and unfeeling, what he

* Prov. iii. 3, 4.

† Mich. vi. 8.

‡ Math. v. 7

§ Psalms cix. 12. 16.

|| James ii. 13.

¶ Prov. xii. 10.

would think of a man who should stab his best friend to the heart without any provocation? Would he consider him a merciful man? You are astonished, and insulted when I declare, that you are guilty of a greater crime. It is *sin* that *crucified* the Lord of life and glory—that nailed him to the shameful tree,—that thrust the spear into his side; and every *sin*, *however small* which you commit, drives the nails afresh into the hands of your best and only real friend, and thrusts the spear again into his heart! O sinner! pause and reflect, before you commit one more bloody act. The wicked Jews did this direful deed ignorantly, but you are doing it knowingly and wilfully.

There are many of us, however, that call ourselves the children of God, and the friends of Jesus Christ, who like the young man in the gospel “observe all these things”—we would not wilfully and knowingly sin against our God for worlds, yet we carelessly, and it may be ignorantly, violate the sacred principles of mercy. Can the righteous judge of all the earth say well done *good* and *faithful* servant, to such in the great day? We cannot be too careful in the *examination* of our own hearts.

In every instance where an opinion is to be formed, or a decision to be made, the premises must be fully and fairly stated and understood, before a correct conclusion can be drawn.

It will be admitted universally by all christians, that the wide spread families of the earth, have all one common Father—that Almighty God is the Father of the spirits of all flesh, who has proclaimed his name to be, “the Lord, the Lord God, *merciful* and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth.”

No *good father* would experience pleasure in seeing some of his children prosperous and happy, while others were pining in want and misery, and forgotten by their more fortunate brethren. A good parent provides for the necessities of all his children; and were he to see one hoarding up those things which he had provided and designed for all, to the exclusion of others who were suffering, it would not be pleasing in his sight—nor could he say to such a one—well done my good and *merciful* child. Hence the great propriety of our divine Redeemer’s command—“lay not up treasures for yourselves upon earth.” What would the affectionate father say on seeing one child throw his money, or bread, or raiment into the fire, while another was lifting up her watery eyes and widowed hands to him, imploring *only* bread to satisfy the pressing wants of nature, and simple coarse raiment to protect her shivering body, and her little ones from the wintry blast?—All the families of the earth, of whatever country or clime, of whatever hue or complexion—however rich, or poor; wise or ig-

norant, are *but one*, and in reality bear to one another the affinity of *Brother, Sister, Father, Mother*, or sustain to one another all these relations, for all are one in Christ.

He says, "whosoever will do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, the same is my *mother, my brother, and my sister.*" Keeping this relation carefully and constantly in view, let us *examine our own conduct* In the management of the things committed to our care by our heavenly Father, we must be governed by his directions, by common sense and reason.

Property or earthly possessions, in the estimation of every reflecting man, can only afford a support to the passions in this world. The definite amount *necessary* for this purpose, no one can determine for another. Every christian in deciding on this nice point for himself, should be governed by a very moderate standard, as the result of his decision will have a direct and powerful influence on his *faith*, and without faith it is impossible to please God. How can a man with much property or great riches, say, "God is my trust, and if these things were all swept away, I could cry with good old Job, the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord." But whatever may be the standard we may erect, or amount of property we may think it would be safe or proper for us to hold, there can be no excuse or allowance made

for *waste*—for *every cent* we shall have to account for in the judgement day, as certainly as every idle word we speak.

Houses are designed for the protection and comfort of man; but nothing ornamental about a house has a tendency to protect us from danger, or screen us from the cold; therefore every thing which is only designed for ornament, or to make a beautiful appearance about our houses, is unnecessary, and *every cent* it costs more than the charge for plain substantial work, is a *cent* taken from our poor beggared *widowed sister, or mother*. Furniture should be used for our convenience, and comfort—consequently a plain pine or walnut table, or sideboard, would fully answer every useful purpose. Does it not necessarily follow that all we pay for fine mahogany or other costly furniture, more than the sum that *pine or walnut* would cost, is just so much taken from our heavenly Father's poor children; and the only advantage, if advantage it can be called, we can derive from this cruel conduct is, that it increases our pride, and the better prepares us for the fire that never can be quenched. Paintings and engravings, have no definite use, but to feed the fire of pride and vanity; therefore *all* the money paid for such superfluities is taken out of our Father's coffers and thrown into the fire; surely such conduct cannot be a mark of *mercy* or good sense. A pious intelligent professor of religion, some time since said to me, "God has

given me a talent for painting, and I must improve it." The *voluptuary*, the *drunkard*, or the *devotee of pleasure*, might use the same argument with equal propriety. *We may as well feed the grosser sensual appetites and passions, as gratify the lust of the eye.* Food is evidently designed to promote our health, and perpetuate for a time our existence on earth; and that which is only calculated to please the taste has a direct tendency to enfeeble our constitution, and shorten our days, while it takes much plain wholesome diet from our Father's poor children.—Indulgence in such food, therefore, is not consistent with *mercy*. We have several substitutes for tea and coffee, in this favoured country, which would not cost one tenth part of the money which is expended for these articles of foreign growth. How then can any one account for the difference at the bar of that just and holy God, who delivered up his Son to shame, and poverty, and reproach and death, for our redemption—that we might be saved from every evil, and rendered *merciful* one to another! Do not sound an alarm, and say such a course would destroy commerce; from the blind sons of this world we expect this objection—but what have we to do with the traffic of this disordered world? Let the dead bury the dead; but let us who are of the day, walk as children of the light: let us fearlessly and faithfully discharge every duty, and leave the consequence to that

God, who has done, and will do all things well.—“*Leave to his sovereign sway to choose and command.*”

“*So shalt thou, wondering, own his way; how wise, how strong his hand.*” Our master’s kingdom is not of this world; and we, who are his subjects, should not spend our precious time in building earthly castles which will fall in broken ruins on our heads, ere they are yet finished: particularly seeing it would be at the expense of an important heavenly *virtue*, which will adorn and beautify the merciful, when suns and earthly systems shall be hurled from their centres and seen no more forever. *Mercy* will shine brighter than the sun, when all the heavenly planets shall have waxed old as a garment, and be folded up and laid aside by the omnipotent hand which created them. While eternity shall roll its ceaseless round, the imperishable gem of *mercy* will shine with undiminished lustre.

Our wearing apparel is evidently intended by our merciful Creator, to protect us from the inclemency of the weather, and to conceal our nakedness. Consequently every article or part of our dress, which does not answer the purpose for which it is designed, in the eye of heaven, and all holy men, tends only to deform while we vainly suppose it ornaments. Can any kind of jewelry, either plain or splendid, conceal our nakedness, or screen us from the wintry blast? Utterly in-

possible! It will necessarily follow that all the money paid for any description of jewelry, is so much taken out of the Lord's treasury, and thrown into the fire. The same may be said of *veils, ribands, lace, ruffles, costly combs, fine bonnets, &c.* Do our cravats in warm weather render us more cool and comfortable; or do they particularly conceal our nakedness? I know that some well disposed people are under an impression that it would be indecent not to wear a cravat—it would expose, say they, our necks to public view; and yet those who should be the standards of decency—ladies 'who move in the highest earthly circles, will expose their bosoms to the inspection of every wandering eye, and because it is fashionable, it is *esteemed modest, and altogether decent!* Such is not the judgement of him, with whom we have to do.—God sees the motive, and will enter into judgement with us on the principles of strict and eternal justice. Many will raise their voices and their hands and exclaim, *fastidious! ridiculous!* what, these *little trifling things*, have they any thing to do with religion? surely, religion is not an external garb, but is seated in the heart, far concealed from eyes of flesh. Does the high and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity look upon such trifles? I respectfully answer, yes, his gracious eye observed the poor widow, when she cast two mites into the Lord's treasury, and he entered it publicly and honourably to

her credit in his holy book. He has declared that not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice, and the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. He is the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Can a good and merciful God allow me respectfully to ask, see us put our hands into his coffers and take from thence, say only *one cent*, and throw it into the great deep, to blacken our pride, while his poor widowed child, looks up with the big tear of distress rolling down from her weather-beaten cheek, and asks for crumbs to feed her little ones, and not be angry with us?

When we shall come to meet our poor brethren at the bar of God, who suffered for the bare necessities of life in this world, while we indulged in our "*good things*," and conformed to the extravagant maxims of the world to please the devil's children, and the righteous judge shall inquire of us, why did you not sell those unnecessary things and give to the poor sufferers? what will, what can we say? Will we say "it would not have been respectable, or comfortable, or decent, thus to have denied ourselves the rich comforts of life—we thought none had a better right to them than thy children; we were called by thy name, and received them, as from thy hand, and asked thy blessing on our sumptuous fare, and returned thee thanks every time we sat down, or rose up from our tables. We could not wear a coarse, or a

wool hat, because we should have been ridiculed by all our neighbours, and it would have pained our heads?" Will we make such idle apologies, while we behold the head which wore the crown of thorns for us? Will we not, when we see him in his glory, and reflect upon his poverty and sufferings, rather sing the song of the poor man who was found without the wedding garment! When we meet all the poor suffering children of God, who, like Lazarus, will be safely lodged in Abraham's bosom, but who in this world begged for crumbs; while our purple and fine linen, and sumptuous fare stare us in the face, can we hope to hear the judge immortal say, these are my *merciful* children, reign with me forever more?

Jesus says, and will say in the great day, whatever you have done to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done to me. Then it appears that we are not only feeding our own unhallowed passions and appetites, and robbing our Father's poor children by our excesses, but that in so doing we wound and slight the Lord Jesus Christ, and in effect say—"Master, you may wear the thorns, and drink the gall, and wear the seamless garment in your own person, and suffer for food and raiment in the persons of your poor brethren, but we must, and we will indulge in the comforts of this life, whatever the end of it may be."

Allow me to relate an incident which oc-

curred several years ago; it made considerable impression on my mind at the time, and at this day I bless God for the providence which gave rise to it. I met on the high-way an old grey headed man, who asked me for *one cent*. From his language and address I perceived he had seen more prosperous days. I asked him what benefit one cent could be to him? He replied, he was far from his friends and home, and occasionally had to pay ferriage, and other incidental expenses; he did not however complain, or intimate that he was unkindly treated by the public. I then inquired what his prospects were, in reference to another world—they were certainly very gloomy in the present. From his reply, and the simple but pointed relation of his experience, I had every reason to believe that he was then in possession of the pearl of great price, though an earthly beggar. I paused, and pondered the circumstance in my own mind. Here is a child of my heavenly Father; an old grey headed pilgrim of the cross, a stranger in a strange land, far from any earthly friends and comforts, who respectfully solicits *one cent* to aid him on his toilsome journey. I examined myself from head to foot and found that I had expended many dollars for what might have been dispensed with, without depriving me of one real benefit or comfort—first, several dollars might have been saved in my *hat*, and something from every part of my dress.

I thought upon the poor widow, who gave two mites, and reflected upon our Saviour's command, to gather up the fragments that nothing might be lost—I thought upon the crown of thorns, another stranger in this cold world wore for me. I was ashamed, I was condemned—I found this man's blood upon me; the money with which these unnecessary things were purchased, belonged to this poor old man's Father! Was I not a robber? and what was my gain? *Pride*, that master sin, was fed and strengthened. And what was my motive? Evidently to recommend myself to the sons of Belial, my divine Master's deadly enemies. I saw then, and still believe, that *one cent* expended to gratify the passions or appetites exclusively, or for any article not really useful and beneficial, is a departure from the high and honourable standard of *mercy*. By this rational view of the subject, we may more fully comprehend the import of those passages in God's word—*"Except a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."*

"Except ye deny yourselves daily, and take up your cross and follow me, ye cannot be my disciples." *"Whosoever will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God."* Here we may clearly discover the importance of *small things*, and learn why our *faith is so weak*.*

*To show more closely the importance of *small things*, it is only necessary to remark, that *one cent per week* from eve-

Are we governed by our great Redeemer's words or precepts at all times? He says, "blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the son of man's sake." Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy—"for behold your reward is great in heaven."* Who of us comply with this plain injunction? When all manner of evil is said of us falsely, and every insult is heaped upon us, do we rejoice? Do we even bear such treatment with patience? It will not do for us to say that we cannot comply with the requisitions of Jesus Christ,—that would make him unreasonable.—Rather let us say honestly, "such trials are not pleasing to our fallen nature, and we will not obey the command of Christ when exercised under them. Besides we should not expect to be men, before we have been children. We believe that none but full grown christians can glory in tribulation, and count it all joy when they fall into divers temptations.† "And rejoice when they are called to suffer shame and reproach, &c." But there are plain instructions given by our divine Master, which *all* may strictly comply with who will; nor can any professor of religion in this

ry professor of religion in the United States, would amount to about one million of dollars per annum; which is nearly double as much as the whole amount now raised by all the charitable institutions in our country.

* Luke vi. 22, 23.

† James i. 2.

highly favoured day have the testimony of a good conscience who neglects them. We may say with Saul,—“Blessed be thou of the Lord; *‘I have performed the commandment of the Lord;’*” but we may be sure that our sins will find us out. Our Lord says expressly:—“When thou makest a dinner, or a supper, *call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, or thy rich neighbours*, lest they also bid thee again, and recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast; call the *poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind.*”* We may evade, and say, “we do not make feasts;” but are the *poor, and maimed, and blind*, as often found at our tables, and as welcome there, as our friends and rich neighbours? In many instances we must plead guilty, and if the righteous judge do not depart from the truth, or retract his own words, he cannot say to any of us who neglect these plain precepts, “*well done good and faithful servant.*” It is impossible to believe that Jesus Christ would swerve from the truth, or suffer one jot or tittle of his word to fall to the ground, to save the whole world. Hence our *genuine living faith* must be weak. These *small things*, will be awfully large in the judgment day. Again, the Lord Jesus expressly says—“Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you

And unto him that smiteth thee on one cheek, offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid him not to take thy coat also.”*

We may attempt to explain the simplicity and force of these plain precepts away, but they will meet us in the great decisive day. Christ expressly declares, and we are sure his word will stand when the earth shall be burned up—“He that cometh to me, and heareth these sayings, and doeth them not, is like a man who built a house on the earth; against which the stream beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.” We are expressly commanded to pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks; and positively forbidden to *speak evil of any one*; but who of us regard these precepts? If we are partial, and have respect to persons, if we slight the poor, and pass them by, and smile on the rich and the popular, we must be damned, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. “My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place; and to the poor, stand thou there, or sit here un

der my footstool: ære you not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.”* *Conformity to the world*, is expressly forbidden.† Can we conscientiously say (for there will be no equivocation in the judgement day) that in our intercourse with the world, we do not *unnecessarily conform to its customs, manners, maxims, &c?*

Have we a sideboard in our dining room which cost from fifty to one hundred and twenty dollars, when one that would have cost only *ten* or *twenty* dollars would have answered every *beneficial purpose*, and shown that we were *not conformed to the world?* Remember life and death are pending.—God’s word cannot fail.—Do I wear a hat which cost six or eight dollars, when one that would have cost one or two dollars, would have answered the same purpose, and given evidence that *I was not conformed to the world?*

Can our amiable female friends say that they do not wear any article of dress—lace, ribands, veils, corsets, &c. to conform to the fashions and maxims of this disordered world? In all and every part of their wearing apparel they should have an eye singly fixed on

* James ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. 8, 9.

† Rom. xii. 2.

pleasing God; to attain this desirable object, let them place their eyes on some poor suffering widow, with a parcel of little orphans around her, crying for bread as well as comfortable raiment, and hear Christ say, "whatever you do to her, ye do unto me." If they have common sense and common honesty, they will discover, under such circumstances, how far they can conform to the fashions of this wicked world, and, at the same time, love God with all their heart, strength and soul. That amiable sister should ask herself candidly, do I wear a bonnet, which cost *eight or ten dollars*, when I could have made one myself that would answer every *useful* purpose, which would not have cost fifty cents, and proved to all around me that I was not conformed to this world? The little clause, or injunction quoted above cannot be removed from the book in the great judgment day, and alas! how many will stand condemned when they read it in Christ's right hand, at the bar of God.

My respectable friends may seriously inquire of me, if the course I recommend were pursued generally, what would become of the arts and sciences? Should we not soon return to the savage state? I would respectfully reply, by asking, where are we, as christians, commanded to cultivate, and watch over the progress of the arts and sciences, with anxious solicitude. Is the ex-

ample of the Ephesian Craftsmen intended for our imitation?

Allow me to ask you what injury, can any useful art or the science sustain, by our saving every cent of the money we have been accustomed to expend in useless and unnecessary articles; and by our economizing every moment of our time, in order that we may employ it in some useful way? Would not this course enable us to buy more books, and afford us more time to read them? Might we not spend more of our time in prayer, and meditation, and holy conversation, in instructing the ignorant, adorning and beautifying the immortal soul, which must shine and blaze in joy and glory around the throne of God, through a never ending eternity? It is enough for those who are blinded by the god of this world, to waste their money and time on baubles which they must relinquish at death, to burn in hell forever. A pious and intelligent friend asked me some time since, what would become of the poor mechanics if my counsel were generally followed and put in practice? I replied, "the objection involved in your query can be answered with great ease; but first allow me to ask you a plain question; when you buy fine cloth, or a fine hat, or furniture, or a gig, do you really consult the interest of the poor mechanic?" He was an honest man, and here the argument ended.

We are, however, fully aware that if the

system of economy which the gospel inculcates, and reason enjoins on the followers of Jesus Christ were rigidly practised, it would bear hard on many pious industrious mechanics for a moment. Hence it was that Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen were so much enraged with St. Paul. But is it possible, in this christian land, and in this enlightened day, that any of us, who are called christians, are unwilling to make sacrifices for the cause of Christ, and to insure the salvation of our souls? Or is the reign of the Beast already so universal, and so powerful that none are permitted to buy or sell, or manufacture, unless they receive his mark either on their foreheads or in their hands?

It will only be necessary to inquire, are there no mechanics who make nothing but plain substantial work, designed alone for *utility* and not for ornament, and yet who support their families bountifully? If there be such characters, (and that there are none can doubt) then it is not the fear of want, *but the fear of men*, by which our friends are influenced in making *fashionable work*. If our respected friends who are mechanics, would confine themselves to plain substantial work exclusively, it is very possible that they might not be able to accumulate large fortunes, or vie with their rich neighbours in extravagance and folly. But if they prefer the smiles of men, and the good things of this world to the favour of God and the joys

of heaven, we can offer no argument to satisfy their minds, no promise that would indemnify them for the loss of their earthly honours and comforts.

Our own candid opinion is, that God would smile mercifully on that man who would firmly and honourably say,—“*I will starve before I will procure my bread by feeding the corrupt flame of pride in others.*”

Our merciful Saviour plainly informs us that for every idle word we speak, we shall have to give an account in the day of Judgment. He does not intend to convey the idea by this declaration, that we are to be gloomy and austere in our intercourse with others; but that we, as his followers, are to be as far removed from a spirit of *levity* as from *monkish sourness*.

The christian's whole deportment should be *solemn, weighty and dignified*. Let any one, particularly a minister of the gospel, go from the gay circle where the conversation has been light and unimportant, where he himself may have been amusing the company with pleasing anecdotes, *into the apartment of death*; the dying man with a faltering tongue appeals to him,—“O thou man of God, ask of heaven a short respite for a guilty criminal; the hand of death is upon me, and I am unprepared to meet the righteous judge of all the earth; if I die now I must be damned forever. Ask, O ask your God to **extend** mercy, even in this unseasonable mo-

ment—he will hear you, he will grant your request, he has promised to do so, and cannot lie.” The poor dying sinner’s confidence in the guilty trifler strikes him with secret shame, and the deepest condemnation.

Let us *examine* more minutely, this *spirit of levity*, too common even under the sacerdotal robe. Suppose my brother were condemned to die, and appointed to be executed in a few hours, and I were seen laughing, and jesting, and making all around me merry, in the near prospect of this tragical scene; what would any man of common sense say of me? What do we daily and hourly see before our eyes? Not only one, but many of our heavenly Father’s children condemned to die—the hour of their execution delayed only by the intercessions of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose bleeding side, and mangled hands, loudly proclaim, “Father I suffered this for them. O spare them yet another day.”

Were we introduced into an apartment where an aged venerable father was weeping over the lifeless corpse of a beloved son, and did we there begin to laugh, and trifle and jest, it would be *worse than savage barbarity!* And yet many of us can jest and trifle, in presence of the great God, whose Son is present to view, expiring in agony and blood! Remember all is one *eternal now* with God. Reader, christian, fellow-traveller to eternity, you cannot indulge in light,

and frivolous conduct, or conversation, and stand justified the next moment before the bar of a holy God. These are generally termed *little things*. Alas! how many will lose their souls and take up their abode in the gloomy regions of woe and misery forever, for indulging in *small things*. The man who can be employed to commit murder for one dollar, is a worse member of society, than another who would do the same deed, but for not less than fifty thousand dollars.

The next principle which it will be necessary for us to *examine*, forms the brightest trait in the christian's character. As the light of the moon and stars is absorbed by the superior light of the sun when he appears, so *love*, stands pre-eminent among the other christian graces and virtues. The standard for this principle is erected by our Lord Jesus Christ—we can *examine* it safely by no other rule.* “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy heart*, and with *all thy soul*, and with *all thy mind*.” This standard is not only righteous in its nature, but altogether reasonable in its claims. God is our *Father*, our *benefactor*, and only *real and unchangeable friend*; but above all, Jesus Christ, who is one with the Father, is represented as being our *husband*. “For thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall

* Matth. xxii. 37.

he be called.”* “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; I have espoused you to one *husband*, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”† The church, consequently each member of it is termed the *bride*, the lamb’s wife.‡ This is the most exalted, and endearing relation we sustain to Christ; in this character, more clearly than in any other, we may see and feel the necessity of giving him our undivided affections. The honourable man cannot—will not share his wife’s affections with any rival on earth. *Death* would be more welcome to him than even one doubt of his bosom companion’s fidelity. The glory, and the dignity conferred on us by being acknowledged as the *bride, the Lamb’s wife*, should constrain us to *examine* carefully every thought passing through our minds, and every word we speak, particularly to his rival, *the world*, lest we should arouse his jealousy.

It should be a source of great gratitude and joy, that in reference to this cardinal point, which forms the centre, and substance of our religion and happiness, there is no possibility of being deceived if we are honest, nor any ground for the existence of *one doubt*. The affectionate mother is not left to cold conjecture, and doubtful uncertainty with regard to the affection she feels for her little babe. The honourable wife would be insulted, were you seriously to ask her, do you

* Is. liv. 5.

† Cor. xi. 2.

‡ Rev. xxi. 9.

love your husband? Our love to Christ must be greater than that for father, mother, wife or child; yea, even greater than for our own life.* Therefore it is impossible that we can be deceived, or left in a state of suspense respecting our religion, if we are only candid and honest with ourselves. This constitutes an internal evidence, which *cannot admit of doubts*, otherwise we must allow that we cannot certainly know we love any object on earth. But where love is really fixed in the heart, whether it be for our relatives, or friends, or our God, it will always be manifested by our conduct. Hence Christ says, “if you *love me*, keep my commandments”—which is the last particular we *examined*. Thus our *love*, and *obedience* and *faith*, like three living streams, which meet and sweetly mingle together, form one united current, and move on with increasing velocity towards the great ocean. God is a *fountain* of living water. *God is love*. As the water proceeds from, and returns to the ocean, so our religion, *our love*, all proceeds from, and returns to God.

There is another rule, or criterion given in the gospel, whereby we may know assuredly whether we love God supremely or not, viz. “He that loves God, loves his brother also; and if any man say he loves God, and *love not his brother*, he is a liar.”† And Christ unequivocally declares, that

* See Luke xiv. 26.

† 1 John iv. 20.

whatever we do unto one of *the least* of his brethren, he will consider as done unto him. He identifies himself with the poorest *christian* on earth, whether white or black. Remember Jesus Christ must have *all our affections*; we cannot therefore divide them. Let us now advert to the incident mentioned, page 65; of the old grey-headed man on the high-way, who solicited only one cent. I must in this instance be considered as transacting concerns with Christ himself, agreeably to his own words. He sees on my head a hat which cost five or six dollars, evidently intended to recommend myself to his rival, and most deceitful enemy, when I could have obtained one that would last as long, and answer equally as well every useful purpose, for two dollars or less.

Under such circumstances, could it be proved by any fair mode of reasoning, that I even desired honestly to love the Saviour *with all my heart*? While I am wasting dollars, he is contented to ask *for only one cent*, and that too of his own money! Hence I argue, that if we expend *one cent*, exclusively to gratify our passions or appetites, or to meet the views, and opinions of others, we by that act put it out of our power to *love God with all our heart, with all our strength and soul*; consequently, if we allow ourselves such indulgences, we must expect to enter into heaven, on other than the gospel terms—to climb up some other way—for we

cannot enter in by Jesus Christ, who says he is the door, and that all those who are not thieves and robbers must enter in by him.

Let us not unwisely begin to say, "the poor are indolent, they are dissipated, &c." We are not investigating the character of the poor, but examining a principle which must dwell richly in the good man's heart, when the world shall be no more.

To establish the truth for which we are contending, it is only necessary to prove that there is one virtuous, holy man of God in the world, suffering for the necessities of life. It is well known that among the poor, iniquity in its crudest forms, and blackest colours is to be found; but this fact does not affect our argument in the slightest degree. Let us refer to God's own word, and hear what he says about the *poor* and the *rich*; surely no modest man will cavil with his Maker. "For the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in the land."* "Blessed is he that considereth the *poor*, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble; the Lord will preserve him and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth, and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."†

* Deut. xv. 11.

† Psalms xli. 1, 2, 3.

“For the Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.”*

“He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.”† “I know the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.”‡ “*He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker*; but he that honoureth him, hath mercy on the poor.”§ “He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.”|| “Jesus answered and said unto them, go and show John again those things which you do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the *poor have the gospel preached unto them.*”¶

“Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all thou hast, and *give to the poor*, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.”** “And he lifted up his eyes, on his disciples and said, *blessed be ye poor*, for yours is the kingdom of God.”†† “Only they would that we should *remember the poor*; the same which I was also forward to do.”‡‡ “Hearken my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath

* Psalms lxi. 33.

§ Prov. xiv. 31.

** Matt. xix. 21.

† Psalms cxiii. 7, 8.

|| Prov. xix. 17.

†† Luke vi. 20.

‡ Psalms cxl. 12.

¶ Matt. xi. 4, 5.

‡‡ Gal. ii. 10.

promised to them that love him.”* This is only a slight and partial specimen of what God says of the poor; it is an honourable and consoling testimony in favour of that despised part of the human family.

Let us hear what he says of the rich and the great. “Then said Jesus to his disciples, verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of Heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. He also that received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the *deceitfulness of riches*, choke the word and he becometh unfruitful.”† “He hath filled the hungry with good things; and *the rich he hath sent empty away. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.* And when he heard this, *he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich.*”‡

But they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition; for the love of money is the root of all evil;—Which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.§ “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come

* Jas. ii. 5.

† Matth. xiii. 28—xix. 23, 24.

‡ Luke i. 53—vi. 24—xviii. 20.

§ Tim. vi. 9, 10.

upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped up treasures together for the last days.”*

The eyes of Almighty God are most assuredly upon the poor; nor will he forget the needy. He says the cries of them, who have reaped down your fields, and have been defrauded of their rights, have entered into his ears. There is a day of retribution at hand; nor will any of us, who have not loved our poor brother in deed, and in truth, escape the vengeance of a just and holy God. Were your wife to purchase a jewel, or a toy, or a piece of unnecessary apparel with the money designed by you to feed and clothe your little ones; and to wear that ornament to a ball or party, given by your enemy, and evidently a bad and dangerous man, I am sure it would mortify and grieve you to the heart. Let us then remember our husband's poor suffering children, and not spend one cent of his money to render us pleasing in the eyes of his enemy. *He is a jealous God.*

The word of God affords us another criterion, by which we may determine satisfactorily, whether we *love* God supremely or not, viz: “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”† By the term

* James v. 1, 2, 3

† 1 John ii. 15.

world, the inspired writer must mean in this place, the *riches, honours, pleasures*, together with the maxims and customs of the unregenerate part of mankind. These things are placed before our eyes in all their alluring, fascinating forms; they become the potent rival of the Lord Jesus Christ for our affections. Were *we* as wise and honourable and judicious in our conduct, as the children of this world, we would spurn all these things which constitute *the world*, from our embrace, with honest indignation, knowing them to be of a delusive character, and in reality our desperate enemies. The world with all its alluring varieties, may be termed the mammon of unrighteousness; and we can no more *love*, than we can serve, God and Mammon.

Our affections should be weighed candidly and righteously *now*—when we shall have left this world it will be too late. Let us examine each feature of our Saviour's rival, then shall we be able to ascertain who has the greatest share in our affections.

1st, *Riches*. Is there no command or precept in God's holy word, which I would not observe more scrupulously, if I was offered one hundred thousand dollars for attending to it, than I do now—say, respecting the *Sabbath day, conformity to the world, speaking evil of no man; the being smitten upon one cheek and turning the other*. If we could be induced to comply with these precepts or

any other enjoined on us in God's word, by any amount of money which could be named, more carefully than we now do, then would we give money the preference, and consequently love it more than our divine Redeemer. Are we as punctual, and careful in attending the worship of God, in cold, or wet, or any inclement weather, as we should be to some important case we had pending in court? Do we grieve or murmur, when we meet with pecuniary losses? Every kind of evidence on this subject should be impartially *examined*, and an honest decision be made. Every judicious person, will guard against the approach of an enemy, and if he cannot conquer him will fly from his presence. That riches are imminently dangerous, we have the best authority on earth or in Heaven to prove, is a fact.—Do we guard against their approach? Are we afraid of them? Do we not sometimes grieve because they are so far from us? *Astonishing infatuation*, fatal delusion, that we should thus love and pine to embrace a deadly enemy.

The love of *honour* is equally as dangerous, and almost as universal as the love of riches. Christ inquires expressly, how can ye believe who receive *honour* one of another, and seek not that honour which cometh from God alone? Why is it that we do not feel as comfortable when we are slighted, and evil spoken of, as when we are kindly received, and favourably and highly commend-

ed? Is it not because we desire the honour of man? Our feelings on such occasions cannot be in conformity to our Saviour's express injunction, when he says, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy; for behold your reward is great in heaven."* It cannot be pleasing to Christ to see his followers and friends treated with such indignity; but it is highly pleasing in his sight to see us spurn with contempt and indignation his rival from our presence; and when this rival appears in the form of earthly *honour* there is no stronger evidence of our unshaken fidelity, and supreme love for Jesus Christ, than that which we give, by rejoicing with real joy under the circumstances he mentions. Some have vainly supposed that if they were regardless of the good opinion of man, they would have no incentive to virtue, and would soon sink into vice and infamy. If the eye of the King Immortal, invisible, only wise God, is not sufficient to regulate all our motives and movements, adieu forever to real virtue, dignity or honour.

A desire to enjoy the *gratifications* and *pleasures* of this world pursues us very closely. Many pious conscientious persons, are under an impression that the gratifications,

* Luke vi. 22.

and the pleasures of this world may, and should be enjoyed by christians; that as they are blessings from the hand of their heavenly Father, his children ought to have the preference, and should partake of them, always, however, avoiding excess. They further believe that we cannot be as grateful for the blessings of Providence if we reject, as we may be if we use and enjoy them.

Let us *examine* carefully these sentiments; they are generally received, and are of greater importance, than they are commonly esteemed by many respectable professors of religion.

1st. The gratifications, pleasures, &c.—Why may not christians innocently enjoy the good things which God has given them in this world? I ask for their authority, to do so? Do you refer to St. Paul, when he says, “charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who *giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*”^{*} Is not this injunction expressly directed to the *rich*, those who had forgotten God, even while they were *rioting on his bounty*, who should have remembered that all good things come immediately from that God, whom they daily and hourly forget, insult and deny. Surely, this passage can give no license to christians to indulge in worldly pleasures; *they* are uniformly addressed in language

^{*} 1 Tim. vi. 17.

like this: "*deny yourself daily, take up your cross and follow me, or ye cannot be my disciples.*" "*These are they that have come out of great tribulation.*" Since the fall of man, the things in question have been given rather as a test of our obedience and love, than as a source of enjoyment.

When Adam was created holy, and pure and perfect, and placed in the garden of Eden, God only placed one tree bearing fruit pleasant to the eyes, and much to be desired, beyond his legal touch, as a test of his obedience and affection. But *now*, the forbidden fruit is placed all along the pathway of life; and that we may not be deceived as were our first parents, the following plain inscription is written by Almighty God, and placed full in our view. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes; and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world; and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."* The *lust or desire* of the flesh must include *all that is pleasing to the taste, all*—there is no reservation here. The holy claim for our gratitude is not founded in any of these *perishing gratifications*. No, we look up to the cross, and there behold a sight

* 1 John ii. 15, 16, 17.

which causes our hearts to glow with burning love, and humble gratitude to that God, who so loved us as to give his only begotten son to die for us. *The lust or desire of the eyes*, must include all that is *beautiful* to behold, either in our houses or furniture, our equipage, or our dress; nor can we, regarding these things innocently, make any compromise with the world. God has given us *reason* to govern all our movements wisely, and therefore we should not foolishly be influenced, or led by our unruly, disordered passions; *they must be subdued*, or, *we must be excluded from heaven*; but how are they to be conquered if we cherish them?

When we view the *good things* of this world, placed before us as a test of our *love for our crucified Master*—and regard them in their true character as enemies which meet us at every step in life, while Jesus Christ holds out a crown of life and glory to our view, and says, “fight the good fight of faith, conquer all your enemies, overcome them through the virtue of my blood—my grace is sufficient for thee—and as I have overcome, and have set down with my Father on his throne, so shall my victorious followers sit with me on my throne—I will place a crown of glory on your heads.”

I say, when we do thus, then do we see a real and permanent advantage in them; and should thank and praise God for affording us such opportunities, daily of testing our

treacherous hearts, and of knowing assuredly whether we do love him supremely or not.

In this world we are exiles, and placed in an enemy's land. Neither exiles nor soldiers expect, while they are in the wilderness, or the tented field, to rest on downy beds, or to live on delicious fare. When we leave the battle ground, having conquered all our foes, and enter into our Father's principal possessions, far from this eventful world, then shall we enjoy pleasures, without measure or end. Those who conquer all their passions and appetites, effect a greater victory than any hero who ever drew a sword, or swayed a sceptre on earth. Hence Christ says, we shall be made *Kings and Priests* unto God and his Father. Those who shall have completely conquered all their enemies in time, including the world with all its gratifications and pleasures, will be accounted worthy to be entrusted with kingly honours—they will be confided in by all the inhabitants of heaven.

“Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”*

These *little things* present a formidable front, an army of desperate foes, against whom we must wage an incessant war, or

* 1 Cor. xv. 58.

they will conquer us.* The conflict should, and must be sustained with firmness and intrepidity, if we expect to gain the victory. We have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin. Our divine Master has done this—and says, “he that overcometh, shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

“*We cannot be as thankful to God, as if we had indulged in these gratifications and pleasures.*” This objection I have heard made by wise and pious men—men who minister in holy things. I presume there is not an ungrateful heart in heaven—it is a virtue of no ordinary magnitude, and all those who are now high in glory, must have possessed grateful hearts here on earth. The heavenly world must be examined, before we can settle this question. We inquire where is that highly favoured individual, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day? certainly he must have been truly grateful for such a large portion of this world’s pleasures and gratifications—Surely he must enjoy an elevated seat among the inhabitants of heaven. Is he so high that we cannot see him? No,—there he

* The good things of this life, correctly speaking, cannot be considered either as *evils* or *enemies*; they only assume that character when they feed and inflame the passions and appetites of our fallen, corrupt nature; their natural tendency is to produce such an effect, which renders it necessary for us uniformly, and carefully to guard against their fatal influence.

is, down in the flames of tormenting fire, and begs for only one drop of water, but begs in vain.

We must now turn our eyes from this appalling spectacle, and look for the poor beggar, covered with sores, who was laid at the gate of this favoured individual, and only desired the crumbs which fell from his table. Surely under such indigent, suffering circumstances, he could not possibly have had a grateful heart, and must now lie down in that obscuring smoke which arises out of the bottomless pit.—No, I see him high in glory—even in Abraham's bosom—securely housed in heaven, and highly honoured by God himself.

This argument need not be pursued any further, it is too weak and flimsy to bear the touch of investigation.

It is indispensably necessary that we should be firm and decided; we can make no compromise of our affections; if we handle, and look at, and touch, and admire Delilah, Jesus Christ must spurn us from his embrace. Hear the solemn declaration of heaven. “Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God! And whosoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God.”*

There is another principle connected with the human heart, which it will be important to *examine* with care—viz: *Our humility.*—

* James iv. 4.

“The Lord knoweth the proud afar off”—Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate. When pride cometh, then cometh shame; but with the lowly is wisdom. A man’s pride shall bring him low; but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”*

Not only does the word of God condemn and blacken pride, but reason pronounces it to be inconsistent with the christian character, and contemptible in its very nature. How ridiculous in our view would a proud beggar appear—we are all beggars; the king on his throne is as dependent for every breath, as the beggar at his gate. Man is not only a dependent creature, but unstable and transient in his duration; and is every moment liable to be marked by *degradation’s*

* Prov. viii. 13; xi. 2; xvi. 18; xxix. 23. Isaiah ii. 11, 12. Matth. xviii. 4, and xxii. 12.

blackest blot. “All flesh is as *grass*, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.” Let us repair to the house of mourning, and view that object, which a few weeks since, was the delight and joy of the circle in which she moved—her eyes sparkled with animated lustre, her cheeks bloomed in beauty, and her affectionate heart glowed with love and sympathy—she was rich, she was accomplished, she was loved by her friends; but alas! the king of terrors has paid her an unwelcome and unexpected visit.

She now lies in the cold embrace of death—a mass of *corruption*, offensive to the senses of her nearest and dearest friends—and this, O young man, or woman, is thy certain and degrading doom—To-morrow you may meet it, however loved and honoured you may be to-day. Surely reason declares there is no soil on earth in which pride should grow. Had it not been for the introduction of sin into the world, pride would never have been seen any where but in the bottomless pit. As it came from, so it must return to hell. Those who are stained by its polluted touch, must forever dwell in endless night and misery. It will as certainly destroy our souls, and lead us down to hell, as murder.

In examining the recesses of our hearts, to ascertain whether or not, this artful, deceptious, degrading, ruinous, enemy has found an asylum, or any encouragement there, it will be necessary to inquire—Why

are we offended when we are slighted by others? Or when we are insulted, why do we feel indignant? Why do we wish men to speak well of us, and feel cast down, or grieved when they do not? Is not pride the latent or active cause? I hear an objector inquire, "are you about to rob us of every incentive to virtue and honour?" *I am not—and if the eyes of Jehovah and the approbation of God, are not sufficient incentives to virtue, and honour, and all that is excellent in man, I utterly despair of ever seeing you a virtuous and honourable character.*

A lady of intelligence and piety said to me not long since, "*I think I have been delivered from pride, at least, I take no pride in my dress, for generally I do not know, or think about what I have on.*" I congratulated her on such an important victory, and asked her if she would do me a favour; will you be kind enough to attend the next wedding party there is in town, dressed in *plain clean* common homespun linsey, and tell me when you return, whether or not you thought about your dress? She smiled, and acknowledged she could not go dressed in that style. She had good sense enough to see that nothing but pride could prevent her from attending such a place in such a dress.

Some will openly plead this monster's cause, and contend that a little is *necessary*. If a *little dishonesty be necessary*, then may a *little pride be necessary*. If it be not desi-

rable that your daughter should be entirely virtuous and honourable, then may you stain your white robes, with the blackness of pride. "We must, at least," urges the objector, "have enough to make us decent." A most shameful mistake is made by blending these two principles together. There is as much difference between pride and decency, as there is between light and darkness, or vice and virtue. *Decency*, is an exalted virtue, essential to the christian character. *Pride*, is a vice of the blackest hue—a soul damning sin. Pride and decency, are about as nearly related to each other as *shame* and *humility*. Many unguarded honest persons have been so grossly deceived, as to mistake shame for humility. Hence in all probability, the origin of that erroneous opinion, that *sin*, which is the source of *pride*, and *every other viper*, is necessary, *at least a little of it*, to make us *humble*. A little sin will make us *ashamed*, at least while any virtue remains, but cannot humble us any more than brandy can make a drunken man sober, or the application of fire, produce a sensation of cold. The unholy, unnatural, and unreasonable connexion above adverted to, is generally plead in reference to the article of dress. If we make *fine* or costly clothes essential to *decency*, then shall we exclude from heaven the greater part of those to whom Christ preached the gospel—viz: *the poor*.

This definition would exclude forever, Lazarus from Abraham's bosom, and falsify our Saviour's own words! I have never seen a beggar dressed in fine clothes—it would be a contradiction in terms—it would be mixing light and darkness. Decency calls on us to be *clean*, not only in our dress, but in our *houses and persons*; it calls for modest and becoming behaviour. It affords me indescribable pleasure to enter the poor man's cottage, where every thing is clean and in its proper place. It has been said the beggar may be as proud as the king—that we may be as proud in oznaburgs as in silk and broadcloth—*Granted*. It is sin that defiles the soul, and engenders pride—nothing but the grace of God can humble any man's heart. Shall it, however, be said, because some have killed themselves by eating, that we ought not to eat?

Riches and beautiful objects are the natural food for pride, while coarse apparel and a dependent condition, has a direct tendency to mortify, or thrust at the existence of this deadly evil. The plain word of God declares —“*if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*”* Almost every reflecting person knows that the unceasing urgent desire of the *flesh*, (viz: our fallen corrupt nature) is for fine apparel, splendid edifices, and beautiful objects of every description. If any one should doubt this fact,

* Rom. viii. 13.

let him take one hundred very poor persons, slaves if he pleases, and suddenly make them immensely rich, give them a very large amount of money, and then mark the course they will pursue—it is very probable there would not be one exception to the general rule among them.

The purple and fine linen, the Babylonish garment, the fashionable dress, such as rich persons wear, would probably be the first object they would secure. The second would be the sumptuous board, something to gratify the appetite—then the splendid, or as it would be called by them, the *comfortable house*, &c. &c.

Fallen man cannot make himself *humble* any more than he can make a world; or a grain of corn; yet there are means for him to use to make corn, nor have they ever failed. So in regard to *humility*—use the means honestly and zealously, looking up by faith to God, and he will give thee the desire of thine heart.

If we feel mortified or uneasy, when we are in the presence of those who are richly dressed, because our apparel is inferior to theirs, it discovers a disease, a wound inflicted by sin, something like pride; at least the soul is not perfectly sound—there is an ulcer there. Our coarse apparel, under such circumstances, only brings the wound to view; we may then apply an emolient to the mortified member, viz: we may conform to others

in appearance, and ease the painful sensation in that way; or we may wisely call on the great Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ, to apply the balm of Gilead, which alone can heal the wound, and restore us to perfect health.

As we are very dependent, and all our wants have been bountifully supplied from the hands of a good and merciful God, it is of the utmost importance, that we should be truly grateful for past favours. Our GRATITUDE should therefore be carefully and impartially *examined*. There are innumerable considerations, which should cause our hearts to swell with fervent *gratitude* to God, who is the Father of all our mercies. Perhaps a few of these might be profitably adverted to.

1st. It requires the unceasing care, and power of God, to perpetuate our existence from moment to moment. The farm, the factory, the comfortable fire, all require the unceasing care and efforts of some agent to keep them in a flourishing condition. The same uniform care and attention, but in an infinitely greater degree, is indispensably necessary to keep the little fluttering pulse beating, the purple current flowing, and the vital spark of life burning! Were the great Author of our existence to neglect this complicated machine for one moment, all would be thrown into disorder, and death would instantly ensue.

2d. This care and attention is bestowed by one, upon whom we have no legal claim; whom on the contrary we have insulted and offended in innumerable instances. We have long since forfeited every just claim to his mercy; had he laid judgement to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, we should long ere this, have been swept away with the besom of destruction.

3d. Our condition in life, is not only better than we deserve, but far better than that of thousands as good by nature as we are, and bearing the same relation to our heavenly Father. Sources of gratitude spring up continually on every hand; but the most weighty and important consideration, one of infinite magnitude, is:

4th. "That God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have eternal life." This invaluable gift, and the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ, loudly call for our *fervent and devout gratitude*.

Surely we who are called christians, never allow ourselves to murmur or complain at any of the providences of God—this would be ungrateful in the extreme. Were you to send your servant daily with food from your table, to a poor helpless fellow mortal, who had no claim on your charity; and were he to find fault, and say—"could he send me nothing better; why did you not come sooner?"

were you also informed by the servant that he gave your good things to the dogs; would you be pleased, and think he manifested suitable gratitude for your favours? I need not apply the case—reader you can do it. As we cannot make one crumb of bread, it is reasonable that we should not waste one. As we cannot create one drop of water, we should be truly grateful for every drop and every crumb, and express our thanks for them publicly, and privately—in *deed*, as well as in *word*. Were we to receive a cup of water from a servant, we should feel grateful, and would respectfully express to him our thanks. Shall we treat the King of Kings, worse than a servant?

I passed a night some time ago, with a wealthy and respectable professor of religion, who it was generally thought, loved the world rather more than became him as a *christian*. He took occasion to express to me his gratitude to God for all his mercies. Said he, “when I lie down at night, when I rise up in the morning, when I set down to my table—when I view my farm, and all the good things God has bestowed upon me in abundance, my soul is filled with gratitude inexpressible. I am truly thankful for his small favours, and his great blessings.”

I expressed to him the real pleasure it gave me to hear of his abundant gratitude for all the abounding and unmerited mercies received by him at the hand of God. I consi-

dered it a virtue of no ordinary magnitude; but added, that it was important and safe to examine our hearts very minutely; and then stated a case.—Suppose you had a large and productive farm in Kentucky—and you were to permit a friend to live on it rent free; he makes money abundantly, and fares sumptuously every day, through your bounty. Your son visits the western country—he is met on the high-way and robbed, and desperately beaten by a band of ruffians; but with great difficulty reaches your tenant's door, mangled and forlorn; he applies for admission into his house, and a little attention, until he can recover his health and strength. Your tenant informs him that it is not convenient then to receive strangers; his good neighbour is a good man, and he will be better accommodated there; he politely directs him where to find this neighbour's house, and returns into his own, *or rather into your house*; sets down to a rich spread table—asks a blessing, and then expresses to his family, his gratitude to his friend in Virginia. “I do respect and love him—he is an excellent man—O how thankful I am to him for his kindness to me and my family.” Suppose that you are looking on in a concealed place, and see and hear all his loving kindness expressed, and extended towards you and your unfortunate suffering son. What would be your sentiments and feelings? Apply the case.

Almighty God is the proprietor of your

farms, and all your property, he permits you kindly to live here rent free. He has many children travelling through the cold world, who have fallen among thieves, and have been robbed. Sin has mangled many of them dreadfully; many of them are suffering for the necessities of life. Your servants who labour and toil for your comfort and accommodation every day, and sleep hard, and fare on the coarsest diet, are your Master's children—your *Father's children*, your own brethren; their Father is looking at you and them every moment.

Now with all your gratitude, do you act towards them as their Father does towards you? When you all meet together at God's holy bar, where all our actions, and words, and property, will have to be accounted for, how will things stand then? He was silent, and I hope he profited by the thought. Rich people are in imminent danger. Money has an assimilating influence—it is hard; it hardens the heart; it is blind, it obscures our vision.

O Lord our God lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Now my respected readers, who must soon stand together with your unworthy servant at the bar of a just and holy God, allow me to ask, how do you find your own account stand upon a fair and impartial *examination*?

Say not the way is too narrow. We must

not expect to gain heaven by a few feeble efforts or desires. Christ says, "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Our state of probation is compared to a battle—to a race, neither of which is ever honestly engaged in without making every possible effort. Our divine Master has declared, that he would rather we were cold than luke warm—that he will spew the luke warm out of his mouth.

O let us avoid that dangerous and offensive state. I have advanced nothing in the preceding pages, but what is reasonable, and scriptural; and may be fully realized by every individual in the land. And, remember that, when we have done all these things faithfully, we have only used the means—and have only done that which it was our duty to do; we are and must still be unprofitable servants, and must be dependent exclusively on Jesus Christ for success. When the honest husbandman has planted and ploughed, and taken all the care in his power of his farm and crop, God must then give the increase, or all his labour will be in vain. We have never yet known any man to labour diligently and honestly, without receiving the blessing of heaven on his exertions; nor have we ever known an idler who made no efforts, succeed in making bread for his family. Let us not stand here all the day idle, because we think the standard is above our

reach. Much may be done by the assisting grace of God.

Let us therefore be firm, and nobly contend for the prize, by a zealous and faithful discharge of *every known duty*, clearly enjoined on us by our Lord Jesus Christ; then may we exercise that *faith*, which will remove mountains from above our heads, and dry up seas under our feet. If we charge a respectable man of the world with a departure from *the highest principles of honour*, he is insulted, and considers himself calumniated. Let us then as children of the most high God act a high, a holy, and an honourable part. Jesus is the sinner's friend; he is both able and willing to save to the uttermost, all who will come unto him. If we say there is a deficiency either of power or inclination on the part of our Saviour, we tarnish his glory, and his character. If then it devolves on ourselves to be made whole *by using the means*, through faith in Jesus Christ; let us only be honest and faithful, and the victory shall be ours.

The prize, the crown of the righteous will be given to us, as well as to the conquering faithful apostle of the gentiles. The rich young man who came to our Saviour to inquire what he should do to inherit eternal life, it appears, had observed or attended to all the larger or ostensible duties—he had kept the law from his youth up; but when the *little things* were disclosed to his view;

when the small matter of giving up the world for heaven, was submitted to him, it was too hard; he could not descend; he went away sorrowful. And O how many will be finally shut out of heaven, who have *done many wonderful things* in Christ's name, who have given their money, and spent their time, and formed societies, and even cast out devils in the name of Jesus Christ. The cross, the blood stained cross of Christ they never bore.

The shame and reproach connected with it was too heavy; they received the smiles and honours of the world, and now the embrace of Christ they cannot have. When they shall come to be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, like Belshazzar, they will be found wanting. They were not crucified with Christ on earth, therefore they cannot reign with him in heaven. They never learned to cut off the right hand, or to pluck out the right eye—with the rich man they will have to remember that they received their good things in this world, and then they must with him be tormented in a flame of unquenchable fire.

I am well aware that the little things recommended in the preceding remarks, will be met by many, with indifference and contempt; they will say these things are too trivial, and insignificant to have any place in real religion, or true devotion. But all those who will condescend to make the experi-

ment, will find, that to comply with them, they must do violence to their fallen corrupt nature, that the old Adam, *and self* must be crucified. Many who see the way clearly, and are willing to meet the sacrifice fully, are and will be deterred by the opinion of the world—the finger of scorn, and the scowl of calumny, will prove heavier than all their labours and personal privations.

It is generally supposed that we live in the golden age of christianity; when there is no persecution, no evil occurrent of any kind, but all is sunshine and prosperity. Only let us, *even now*, draw the line of demarkation laid down in the gospel, and maintain our own ground faithfully, and meet every unhallowed encroachment from the enemy's side, with holy zeal and indignation, and we shall very soon hear the lion roar, and see him prepare his claws for the work of destruction. The carnal mind cannot be reconciled to the pure and holy law of God. Sin is as black now as it ever was, its votaries are the same also. But are christians the same now, as they were eighteen hundred years ago? Have we now the mind that was in Christ? Can we say with St. Paul, "Even unto the present hour, we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labour, working with our own hands—*being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth*

*of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day?''** If such was the religion of the apostles' time, we must frankly acknowledge, it is not the complexion of christianity in the present day. The plain secret is, we have changed, and widened and smoothed the King's high-way for the accommodation of the multitude: There is imminent danger in compromising with any or either of our enemies. The plain unbending way of the cross, is the only safe and honourable road which leads to the promised land.

The word of God in reference to his people, the Jews, is very alarming and impressive, as well as incomprehensible, and should cause christians to pause and seriously reflect upon their ways. "*Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spoke they did not hear; but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.*"† "And the Lord said, who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of

* 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12.

† Isaiah lxvi. 3, 4.

all his prophets. And he said, thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; go forth and do so.”*

The apostle Paul says, “And for this cause *God shall send them strong delusions*, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned, who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.”†

We may apply these extraordinary, and very important declarations, to the Jews, and the Roman Catholic Church, but we should fear and tremble for ourselves. Indeed our business is with ourselves exclusively—we should therefore hold the mirror carefully up for our own portrait, and if blemishes are found there, they will be as offensive to a just and holy God, as if found on a Jew or a Catholic.

The bridegroom is at hand. Our lamps should be kept every moment trimmed and brightly burning.

Whenever the christian is seen, the image of his divine Master should be seen in him.

As we live in an eventful, interesting and highly important era of the world, we have subjoined a few thoughts on coming events; and have adverted to some plain *signs*, which seem to indicate the approach of some great moral and political convulsion, to which we respectfully invite the serious attention of our readers.

* 1 Kings xxii. 20, 21, 22.

† 2 Thes. ii. 12.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

“O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?”—*Matth. xvi. 3.*

MANY pious, intelligent christians believe, that there is a day of prosperity and peace, greater than the church has ever yet experienced, fast approaching; others believe that the millenium is at hand, when the families of the earth, like kindred drops, will mingle into one great, pure, transparent stream, that shall reflect from every part of its surface the image of heaven; whose noiseless and peaceful waters shall in their course spread over the face of the whole earth, fertility and smiling plenty. It is supposed that, in that happy day, all will know the Lord, from the least to the greatest; that all the inhabitants of the earth will bear the moral image of their great Creator, and be filled with the meek and lowly spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ; that the clangour of arms will be heard no more, and the blood-stained banner of war no more be displayed. Such a period, and such a state of things, must be infinitely desirable to fallen, restless man.

It may not, therefore, be improper or un-

interesting, to inquire—Are there any definite *signs* upon which we may assuredly rely, which clearly point to that important day—a day of light, and purity, and peace, and uninterrupted tranquillity and happiness on earth? And when may we expect that period to arrive?

The only *signs* on which we can fully rely in reference to that auspicious day, must be designated in the Holy Scriptures. In the word of God, however, there is but little said immediately bearing on this interesting subject; less in the New, than in the Old Testament; excepting what is found in the Apocalypse, which is very obscure, and difficult to be understood by mortals with no more light, or experience than we now possess. In the New Testament there are many clear and satisfactory *Signs* mentioned, which point directly to the millennial day. From our divine Master's own words, we are authorised to look for, and confidently to expect his second coming, to make an end of sin, and bring in universal, and everlasting righteousness.

Jesus Christ says—"But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."* These

* Matth. xxiv. 36, 37. Luke xxi. 24.

declarations or predictions, cannot refer exclusively to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the Jewish nation and polity, for two plain reasons—first, they were not uttered until that awful period in which Jerusalem began to be trodden down by the Gentiles.—Secondly, that event, however dreadful it may have been, cannot be considered Christ's second coming to destroy sin, and establish universal righteousness in the earth. Neither can those predictions refer to the general judgement. It is clearly intimated that at the time adverted to, Jerusalem should be rescued from the grasp of the Gentiles, and restored to its former possessors. If that city should not be delivered out of the hands of the heathen, and given again to the Jews, many plain predictions in the Old and New Testament respecting that people would never be fulfilled. If, therefore, these predictions do not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, nor the final Judgement Day, they must point definitely to the period under consideration. Other parts of the New Testament afford satisfactory evidence of Christ's second coming: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him will he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation."* "See that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ—looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God,

* Heb. ix. 28.

and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”* It is possible that these passages may be intended to refer to the Great Judgement Day; but it is equally probable that they are designed to point to the Millenium, or that they may embrace both those important periods.

. The apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, is more explicit, and adverts unequivocally to the restoration of the Jews, and the latter day glory of the church, and says, “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be vain in your own conceits, that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”† This passage proves that the Jews will be restored to the favour of God, and *all* become righteous. “*All Israel shall be saved.*” The Gentiles, or the whole world, exclusive of the Jews, are either to be destroyed or saved also at the same time. “*The fulness of the Gentiles,*” must mean either their full and entire *salvation* or *destruction*.

Neither scripture nor reason, will justify the opinion that the Gentiles will be destroyed. It is therefore most certain that Christ will come again to dispel the gloomy clouds of sin; to elevate his church on earth, and to reign gloriously in Zion. But how he will

* 1 Cor. i. 7. Tit. ii. 13.

† Rom. xi. 25, 26.

come, whether in person, or in great spiritual power, we presume not to say; nor is it at all important that we should possess this knowledge. It is not, however, generally believed that he will again appear on earth in person; although many wise and pious people entertain this opinion, and some passages of God's word strongly countenance it, particularly the following—"ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven."*

We, however, are only interested in his coming, the manner should be left with him, who hath done all things well. Man is too diminutive, and ignorant to measure, or much less to anticipate the movements of Almighty God. The families of the earth are more immediately interested in knowing something of the character of that happy day, and of the privileges which will then be extended to man. This information we may in some measure obtain from the following passages of God's word, recorded in the Old Testament:—

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the

lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."* The same prophet says—"And he shall judge among the nations, and he shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."†

This enviable, glorious, happy day, has not yet been realized on earth—it must, it will arrive. God has promised it, and his promise must stand firm. The anticipation of such a period, although its consummation may be still remote from us, should fill our souls with joy and gratitude.

The prophet, a man who was greatly beloved of God, says, "And the kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."‡

Many great and precious promises have been made to the natural descendants of Abraham; it will only be necessary to mention a few of them.

* Is. xi. 6, 7, 8, 9.

† Is. ii. 4.

‡ Dan. vii. 27.

“For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shall not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken, and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment I have forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah to me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted and tossed with tempest, and not comforted! behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And

I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord. And great shall be the peace of thy children.”*

These promises and predictions, refer particularly to the Israelites, the natural descendants of Abraham, and to a day which they have never yet seen; but see and realize it they must and will, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. They have been miraculously preserved for more than seventeen hundred years, a separate and distinct people from all others on the earth, without a country or a home, which they could call their own; nothing but the hand of God could have done this. Many wise and good men believe that these predictions refer only to spiritual Israel, and think that the Jews will never be established as a nation again. The circumstance of their being preserved in such an extraordinary manner for such a length of time, is forcible evidence to the contrary; and the predictions concerning them, describing their future prosperity and greatness as a nation and people, are so plain and conclusive, on this point, that we are constrained to believe that they will be restored to their former country, and become a glorious nation; filled with the spirit and knowledge of God. Their pathetic prophet Jeremiah, says: “Therefore behold the days come, saith

* Isaiah liv. 3 to 13.

the Lord, that it shall be no more said, the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the North, and from all the lands whither I have driven them; *and I will bring them again to their land that I gave unto their fathers.*

Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish; and after that I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every nation, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. For mine eyes are upon all their ways; and they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.”*

In this prediction, their character and their return to the land of Judea is so clearly expressed, that we cannot be mistaken. There are, however, many other prophecies equally clear and unequivocal on this subject. The evangelical prophet says, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the Islands of the Sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of

* Jer. xvi. 14, 15, 16, 17.

the earth. For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, *and set them in their own land*; and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. Whereas thou hast been forsaken, and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of Kings: and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

"And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for Priests, and for Levites, saith the Lord. For as the new heavens, and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain."*

The mournful pathetic prophet Jeremiah points with perspicuity and certainty to the great earthly glory which his brethren, the Jews, shall yet enjoy. "Therefore fear thou not, O, my servant Jacob, saith the Lord, neither be dismayed, O, Israel: for, lo! I will

* Isaiah xi. 11.—xiv. 1.—lx. 15, 16, and lxvi. 20, 21, 22.

save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee; though I make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.”

“Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, and I will not turn away from them, to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.”*

The prophet, who clothes many of his predictions with mysterious figures, when he points to the future glory of the Israelites, uses language plain and intelligible; he says, “for I will take you from among the heathen, *and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.* Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall

* Jer. xxx. 10, 11—xxxii. 37, 38, 39, 40.

be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. *And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people; and I will be your God.* And say unto them, thus saith the Lord God, behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land, and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountain of Israel; and one king shall be king of them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all; neither shall they defile themselves any more with idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. After many days thou shalt be visited; in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people; against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste; but it is brought forth out of the nations, and

they shall dwell safely all of them. And thou shalt ascend and come like a storm; thou shalt be as a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my Holy Name; after that they have borne their shame, and all their tresspasses whereby they have tresspassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid. When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of all their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; then shall they know I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; *but I have gathered them into their own land, and have left none of them any more there.* Neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.”*

The Herdsmen of Tekoa, who faithfully and awfully denounced the judgement of God against the Jews for their sins, whose words the land was not able to bear; in reference to the coming glory of the Israelites, speaks the same language as the other prophets—“And I will bring again the captivity

* Ezekiel xxxvi. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28—xxxvii. 21, 22, 23—xxxviii. 8, 9, and xxxix. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.”*

From these plain predictions, we must be fully convinced, that the Israelites the descendants of Abraham, will yet be highly favoured and exalted of the Lord—that they will become an honourable and holy and distinguished people, walking in the light and glory of the God of their fathers: that the Lord Jesus Christ their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, will visit them again in boundless mercy—that his arms of everlasting love, will be thrown securely around them, and their sins and their iniquities will be no more remembered. But in that day the spiritual and the literal seed will be one; there will then be but one fold, and one shepherd. There will be no discordant sound heard in all the holy mountain of the Lord. It will be a day of great glory, when peace and righteousness shall be multiplied throughout all the borders of Zion; the whole earth will be full of the knowledge and glory of God.

What are the signs of the present times? Do they not clearly indicate the immediate appearance of that happy period? The ap-

* Amos ix. 14, 15.

proach of winter and summer, of day and night, of our dissolution, and of almost every important event in life, is marked by signs and tokens, that the sons of men may not be taken by surprise; nor found unprepared to meet the contingencies of life. In like manner the righteous Author of our existence has marked the approach of the great millennial day, or of Christ's second coming, with signs as clear and satisfactory to the contemplative mind, as those which hail the dawn of the returning seasons, or point with gloomy aspect to the period of our dissolution. We should not therefore remain idle spectators of the scenes which are passing in review before our eyes; neither should we be too curious to pry into futurity, or into things which are wisely concealed from the view of mortals. "Secret things belong to God, but those which are revealed, to us and to our children."

The signs preceding, and accompanying our Saviour's advent into the world, if they had been examined honestly and diligently, were sufficiently clear to have satisfied the Jews that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah. He therefore charges them with hypocrisy for discerning correctly other signs less definite and plain, while those which referred to himself, they affected not to see or understand. God has given us eyes, therefore he will not see for us; he has given

us rational faculties that we may examine his word, and not be deceived.

The word of God is the only safe, and infallible guide to which we can refer on the present occasion. But in the Holy Scriptures, the signs are frequently concealed, for wise purposes, until the events to which they point, have transpired. Sometimes they are of a mysterious character, and difficult to be understood.

There can be but little doubt, however, that the signs mentioned in God's word, which refer to the latter day glory of the church, are verging on to their consummation.

The Apostle to the Gentiles, in writing to the Thessalonians, who, in all probability, were looking for this interesting period to be ushered in immediately—says, “Now I beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind; or troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth, and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he

is God.”* These signs have been literally verified before our eyes. A great falling-away has evidently taken place; nor is it hazarding too much to say, that dying mortals have assumed the prerogative, and awful responsibility, of forgiving sins, a power which belongs to God alone. Daniel says, “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased”—But as that favoured prophet, and man greatly beloved of God, was commanded to “shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end,”† it would be idle and presumptuous for mortals to attempt to disclose what God has concealed.

It is therefore probable that no man on earth, will know the particular time, until it shall burst forth on an astonished world with awful grandeur. Christ says, “For as the lightening cometh out of the East, and shineth into the West; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.” And the apostle to the Gentiles says, “But of the times and seasons brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you; for yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”‡

As the word of God expressly declares, that a day of great light and prosperity will be realized by the church on earth, but leaves the particular time concealed from mortal

* 2 Thes. 1, 2, 3, 4.

† Daniel xii. 4.

‡ 1 Thes. v. 1. 21.

eyes; it will not be improper to notice a few signs of a different character; yet so plain and simple in their nature that he who runs may read. Every thing which emanates from Almighty God, bears the impress of his divine hand. The signs to which our attention will now be directed, may all be included under one, viz: the increasing and abounding *light* which is now being diffused abroad over the whole earth. Before the sun appears above the horizon, his approach is announced by a peculiar star, then by the dawn of day widening and increasing, until the glorious luminary appears in view, and by his splendour sweeps the stars from the sky, and the shades of night from the earth.

As Jesus Christ is the Sun of the moral world, similar effects may be expected to accompany his second appearance. When he was born in Bethlehem, a peculiar star announced his appearance to the wise men of the East. [Here allow me to drop an incidental thought.—At the time of Christ's first appearance on earth, the Jews were anxiously waiting and looking for the promised Messiah; they were praying publicly and privately for the consummation of that great event—that the Holy One of Israel would speedily come and deliver them from their enemies; and clothe them with power, and honour, and greatness. Yet notwithstanding their great anxiety and zeal, behold strangers from a distant country, were the first who

were attracted by this great sight, and honoured with the first view of their infant King. These strangers brought to the Jews, intelligence of the utmost importance; of scenes which had transpired in the midst of Judea, of which the blinded Israelites themselves were profoundly ignorant. Is it not possible, nay, even probable, that this people who are now so far from God; who were the betrayers and murderers of his Son Jesus Christ, who rejected his proffered mercies, and prayed that his blood might be upon them and their children; that they may be the first to see and receive the Lord Jesus Christ at his second coming? As they were completely disappointed at Christ's first appearance, and overlooked their humble King in the manger, and stumbled at the stumbling stone; is it not possible, and even probable, that *we* may be as much disappointed when he appears the second time? They had the promises and prophecies which referred to that event, in their own hands, *and fully believed that they understood them.* The light we now enjoy is not as clear, nor does it point as definitely to Christ's second, as theirs did to his first appearance—We are men of like passions with them.]

It was not only the Star exhibited to the wise men of the East, and their testimony that marked the Saviour's birth; Angels came directly down from heaven to announce the glad tidings; *but not to the wise or the learn-*

ed—to the priests or the Levites; but to the humble, vigilant shepherds in the field. As Jesus Christ changeth not, but is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, it is altogether probable that, at his second appearance, he will not be more attracted by the splendour of earthly edifices, or the wisdom of the world, than he was when he appeared in Bethlehem of Judea, eighteen hundred and thirty years ago.

The prophets of Israel had marked distinctly the time and circumstances of their Redeemer's birth. Jacob and others had specified the time, and Isaiah, with astonishing accuracy, had described the circumstances.*

These predictions, with others, if examined with candour and humility, would have, as a lamp of burning light, conducted the Jews to the manger, where their infant Saviour was laid.

It is said, that about the time of our Redeemer's birth, an almost universal impression obtained, that some extraordinary personage was about to appear on earth; and when the Prince of Peace appeared, the warring, contending nations of this disordered world bowed, unconscious of the cause; and for a time war's blood-stained banner was furled, and the nations of the earth were hushed into repose. The temple of Janus at Rome was closed in token of universal

* Gen. xlix. 10—Dan. ix. 23. 25, 26—Isaiah vii. 14. ix. 6, liii, &c.

peace. When the moral Sun arose on the plains of Judea, the light was diffused, and its influence felt nearly over all the earth. The light shone in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not.

But what are the *signs visible now*? The morning star has not only appeared above the eastern horizon, but the dawn of the millennial morning is spreading all abroad, and announces the immediate appearance of the SUN. Look which way we please, we cannot hide our eyes from the increasing LIGHT. Whether we view its effects upon *religion* or *morality*, or the *political world*, or upon the *arts and sciences*, it is equally perceptible. In the religious circle, what a galaxy of inferior luminaries do we behold, all borrowing their *light* from the *coming Sun*, and scattering their rays abroad over the face of the whole earth. *The Bible and Missionary Societies* shine with the greatest lustre; their vivifying rays are seen and felt in every clime and country under heaven. The Tract, and Sabbath School Societies, hold a conspicuous station among the morning lamps. Tracts are published in almost infinite numbers, and sent into almost every palace, and every cottage in the land. If parents are so poor and illiterate that they cannot read, or teach their children; the Sabbath schools are ready to instruct their rising offspring, while these in turn impart knowledge to their parents, and cause the *light* to shine into their benighted

minds Religious news-papers, a few years since, were unknown in the world, but now they are almost as common and numerous as political papers.

A variety of other religious institutions and societies are imparting all the *light* their respective magnitudes will admit of, to a benighted world. Day is all abroad, and scarcely an intervening cloud is to be seen; excepting a little one like a man's hand, which we shall notice in due time.

In the *moral world* this LIGHT is not less perceptible. The base vice of profane swearing, is vanishing measurably away; as is also the degrading, dangerous practice of tippling, or drinking spirituous liquor. An effort from the bar, as well as from the pulpit, in conjunction with temperance societies, has done much towards reforming the minds and morals of the people, with regard to this worse than beastly vice. Horse racing and gambling are not now, as they were formerly, honourable and fashionable—they have to hide from the light, under the shades and remaining rubbish of the night. Many other vices, once openly advocated and practised, are fast receding from the *light*.

In the political horizon, or upon earthly sceptres and thrones, the light has shone forth, and is perceptible to the least, as well as the greatest. The spirit of liberty which began to dawn on an enslaved world more than half a century ago, has reached the ty-

rants' thrones, and threatens to unnerve their impotent arms, while their vassals are rising into men, and fearlessly declaring, that man was never made to lord it over his fellow man. A mighty effort is now making throughout the world, to shake off the shackles of degradation and slavery, which have so long bound the mass of mankind to the despot's car, and disgraced the families of the earth.

But alas for poor sin disordered man, what a strange sight meets our eyes—in the brightest spot of all the earth—in the very cradle and fortress of *liberty*, and in the temple of our holy religion, and hard by its sacred shrine, we are compelled to witness the blackest blot of all. Is tyranny about to desert the throne, and usurp the cottage? “*If the light that is in us be darkness, how great is that darkness.*”

This spreading *light* is not less visible in its effects upon the arts and sciences. The improvement in the use of steam within a few years past, is truly wonderful, and wears the aspect of magic. Canals and rail roads are rapidly connecting distant points, and uniting the interests and intercourse of those who would, but for such facilities, have still been strangers to each other. The improvements made in the art of printing, are not less astonishing than important. The *light* has shone with equal splendour on the scientific world in these last days. The arts and

sciences are twin sisters, and must ever grow or wither together.

It is utterly impossible, that an effect can be produced without an adequate cause. Where shall we find the cause, or source of this great light, now shining and increasing in the world? We are not left to doubtful uncertainty, or vague speculation, in solving this interesting query. A man of extraordinary character, who spake as never man spake, whom we recognize as the Saviour of a lost and ruined world, appeared in the land of Judea, and made the following declaration, which cannot be plausibly or successfully contradicted. *"I am the LIGHT of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."** Jesus Christ is the *light of the moral world*. From the incarnate Son of God has emanated every ray of *light* which has ever cheered the gloomy abode of mortals. Sin, which is black in all its forms and features, darkened all this nether world, when it poured forth its dark stream of ignorance and misery on our first parents, when through the agency of a tempting devil, they transgressed the commandment of their God, sin threw an impervious mantle of night around our fallen race; nor could there ever have been one ray of *light*, natural or moral, to cheer again this dark world, where sinners dwell, without the interposition of the Son of God in our be-

* John viii. 12.

half. “*God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*”

“The Sun itself, is but his shade,
Yet cheers both earth and sky.”

No human skill or power, can bring *light* and *darkness* together. If a small or large body of darkness is presented to the sun, it is immediately dispersed. Introduce a lamp brightly burning into a dark room, and instantly the darkness disappears; they are irreconcilable. Darkness flies from the coming sun, and seeks a gloomy refuge from his illuminating rays, on the opposite side of the earth. Darkness is a faint emblem of our condition after the fall, or man's state when in rebellion against his God. Fallen man could no more advance one step towards any thing good, even in the conception of *one good thought*, than midnight gloom could approach the splendour of a cloudless sun. It therefore required the wisdom, and power, and love of God, to devise and execute the plan of man's salvation, or of his restoration to the presence and favour of his offended Maker.

Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, in power, and wisdom, and eternity, assumed our nature, sin only excepted. He was clothed in humanity, that he might thereby not only make an atonement for sin, but screen the Father's glory from our sin enfee-

bled eyes, and bring together an offended God, and offending man. He was God manifest in the flesh, and was revealed through that *human veil*, to our vision, as we could bear the sight, and as his infinite wisdom and goodness saw best. He was disclosed obscurely to Adam, more clearly to Abraham, still more so to Moses and the prophets, until the glorious Sun of Righteousness arose to view, eighteen hundred and thirty years ago. Jesus Christ not only declares himself to be the *Light* of the world, but the Holy Scriptures, and his own works confirm the declaration. Though he be disclosed to our view as the Babe of Bethlehem, yet the character of Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, is fully sustained by him. He feeds multitudes with a few loaves and fishes. He commands the winds and the seas, and they obey him. He heals diseases incurable by mortal skill—He raises the dead; teaches others, though never taught himself. He confounds and puts to silence the wise and learned of the earth. The Scribes and Pharisees, like the shades of night before the rising Sun, sink into obscurity in his presence. His *doctrine*, *his precepts*, and *his example*, have poured like a stream of light divine, upon a benighted world.

This glorious light has completely exposed the nakedness of his enemies; and they have been constrained to acknowledge, that he

“spake as never man spake,” while their dark enmity and venom has been directed against him only through the medium of his followers. Though the Son of Man possessed and displayed before the face of an astonished world, *infinite power, and wisdom, and dignity*, yet he was perfectly humble and unassuming.

While the *light* and glory of God shone with undiminished lustre, in every part of the Redeemer’s character, he appears as a perfect man; suffers fatigue, and hunger, and pain; but is never heard to complain.

The lamp of eternity, which he held in his right hand, not only showed us the glory of God, but exhibited this world in its real colours; he weighed it in an even balance before our eyes, and stamped its real value, on its fairest features, viz: *Vanity—a profound blank*. He kept it under his feet. His entrance into the gloomy abode of mortals, was in poverty—in the deep vale of obscurity; hence the poor beggar, or ignorant slave, can approach the manger, and there behold the *light* of heaven and earth displayed in his infant but omnipotent Saviour. He not only appeared on earth to show us the glory of the Father, the deformity of man, the sinfulness of sin, and the emptiness of this world; but he lighted up the dark valley of death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He entered the stern monster’s dominions, conquered death,

hell, and the grave, and rose triumphant over all the enemies of God and man, and opened up to our view the pathway of life and immortality. He then ascended up to heaven, leaving us his *word*, for a lamp to our feet, and a *light* to our path, and sent down the Holy Ghost, as a comforter to remain with man—to guide his steps—to strengthen his heart, and soothe his sorrows while passing through this wilderness to the heavenly Canaan, which lies beyond the boundaries of time. But poor erring man, has in too many instances disobeyed his word, and it has measurably become what the pillar of cloud was to the Egyptians—a cloud and darkness. Man has also grieved the Holy Spirit, and He has almost taken his flight from the ungrateful abode of mortals. And even now, amidst all our privileges and blessings, we may exclaim with the complaining poet—

“O dark, dark, dark, I still must say,
Amidst the blaze of gospel day.”

It is much to be feared, that in very many instances, the light which is in us, has become darkness; yet under these unfavourable and gloomy circumstances, we can take the telescope of God's word, and by an application of the eye of faith, clearly perceive the glorious light of heaven and earth approaching our shores.—The Lord Jesus Christ is coming again, and the whole earth is lighting up with his glory.

Under these circumstances—while God in his word, cries aloud, “behold I come quickly,” heaven and earth is heard to re-echo the impressive sound; and the signs of the times in which we live, proclaim the heavenly visitant at the very door. It may not be improper to inquire, what signs are discoverable among the families of the earth? What is the condition of the church? Is the Bride ready to go forth and meet the Bridegroom at his approach? Have we on the wedding garment, and made every necessary preparation for this great event? These interrogatories are of the utmost importance. The foolish virgins were disappointed and *shut out*—The Jews were unprepared to meet their Saviour—the result was their overthrow and ruin.

It is perfectly reasonable to suppose that Christ’s church (consequently every member thereof) should be *now* in a more *perfect state*, than at any former period of her existence, because she now enjoys more light, and greater privileges than she has ever been blessed with heretofore. It is not my intention to enter into the contentions of this, or any other day. The greatest state of *perfection* we are susceptible of in this world, is *to bear the moral image of God*. Though there exists in the Godhead three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; yet these three are essentially *one*. Neither is there any *division* in heaven. The church triumphant,

is all one—not one dissonant note is heard in all the heavenly world. The great Head of the church teaches us to pray—“*thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.*”

There can be no division between Christ and his church, and all the members composing that body, but the silent rolling stream which divides time from eternity. *Division* is the emblem of death. That which separates soul and body is called *death*. *Union* is *life*. The human body is composed of a great variety of parts, yet all are firmly united, and form but one man; to divide, or take from it gives pain. *Death*, the offspring of sin, the inveterate foe, the last enemy of man, separates the soul and the body; and such is his malignant character, that he does not stop there—he immediately commences his attack upon the poor earthen substance, now helpless and forsaken by the immortal part, and makes it his easy prey. Such is the inveterate enmity of this monster against God and his works, particularly man, that he will never be satisfied, while there remains two particles of body or soul united.

He begins his assault upon the once sparkling eyes, and forces them from their sockets; then with fiendlike delight, tears the pale flesh from those cheeks, which once bloomed in beauty. Bones and sinews, with every other part of the body, are by his angry grasp, and eagle talons, torn asunder, or left a mass of putrefying matter.

In hell there will be neither love nor union, consequently it is the picture of the grave, and the very image of *eternal death*.

It follows as a necessary conclusion, that the more the church is divided in its sentiments, and opinions, and members, the more it is like death and hell. And the more firmly united it is, the more it will resemble God and heaven. Jesus Christ the Great Head of the church, says, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. *Religion is love—God is love*; and *love* admits of no division; even momentary separation is painful. The religion of the Bible must be like its great Author—it must be uniform and consistent—it cannot lead two persons different ways. The word of God is express on this point. "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them."* Again—"Now I beseech you brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there *be no divisions among you*; but that *ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgement*."† The same apostle in another letter says, "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, *being of one accord, of one mind*."‡ Christ expressly commands his disciples and followers, to love one another; nor can there be

* Rom. xiv. 17.

† 1 Cor. i. 10.

‡ Phil. ii. 2.

any genuine love, where there is no real *union*.

If God is the author of our religion, it cannot be of a diversified complexion. If the Holy Ghost is our teacher, we must learn the same lesson, in the same spirit, in whatever clime or country we may be born, or live. "As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The spirit of God cannot lead two persons in opposite directions, that they may reach the same destiny. As the peculiar marks which should distinguish God's church and people on earth, is *love* and *union*, it will be well to examine the nature and complexion of the *signs* which are now displayed to public view from the walls of Zion.

What is the real state of the christian church? Are we all united? Are there no bickerings or animosities, or prejudices existing among us? Are we all joined together in one spirit, reflecting as a consolidated body, the image and glory of God upon a disordered world? Alas! for us, how far from it. Divided into great and small parties; our views and sentiments are almost as varied and diversified as the spotted leopard. This circumstance arms our avowed enemies with their keenest weapons of opposition. Infidels are strengthened by this unsavory food. The unregenerate are bewildered in their minds by our inconsistencies; nor can Jews or heathen recognize in us the image of Al-

mighty God, which they know to be *Union and Love*.

It is said, however, by those who are contented with the present state of religion—with the diversified complexion of the church, that we may, and do differ in things of minor importance; but in the essential doctrines and principles of our religion—in the cardinal points, we all agree—*we are all one*. It would be a source of real joy to every sincere christian to know, that this opinion was founded in truth—to know that all our differences are of a trivial and unimportant nature; that our spots, are only the spots of God's people; but alas, our fears are stronger, and irresistibly rise higher than our hopes. It is unquestionably true that good people may differ innocently in their views and opinions, as well as in their conduct. My neighbour wears clothes different in their colour and texture from mine—this gives me no uneasiness; he does not cultivate his farm as I do; my peace is not thereby disturbed; he thinks less education sufficient for his children than I wish, or intend to give mine; about this there is no contention; he attends to several different pursuits for the support of his family, while I think one branch of business well attended to, enough, at least for me. Yet in all these things there is no discord between us—we visit each other with great pleasure, and are delighted when we meet together.

He is an honest, and an honourable man,

and I love and respect him. He is scrupulously *just*; he loves and greatly admires the laws and government of our favoured country, and this unites us closely together. I respect his interest, and his feelings; nor would I offend him intentionally, or speak a disrespectful word of him for any consideration; these sentiments and feelings are reciprocal, consequently we live in peace and harmony, and enjoy these inestimable blessings in our families; yet my family is more dear to me than his, and justly claims my greatest exertions for their support and comfort, as well as the first place in my affections; this my respectable neighbour knows and approves, and all is peace and quietness between us.

But were I to express my dissatisfaction with the form of government, and constitution of our happy country—or to complain that the laws were too rigid, and could not be kept; were I designedly to take one cent from any man in our transactions, to which I was not justly entitled—in a word, were I to violate any of the numerous laws of our country, or oppress the poor; he would not even then abuse me, *for he is an honourable man*; but he would turn away his feet from the path which leads to my door; he would mildly, but firmly say to his family, “you must not go there, *your character is more dear to me than houses, or lands, or money, or friends.*” Such are the sentiments of all

honourable and respectable people, who make no profession of religion. It is reasonable to expect that servants of the Most High God, should be as united in their sentiments as the children of this wicked world. Christians, as well as the people of the world, may very innocently differ in things of minor importance.

Because my brother, in the bonds of the gospel, is called by a different name, it should certainly not be a cause of resentment, or coolness with me; he may pray oftener in the day, and pray louder than I do; surely this should not offend me. Because he prefers to be baptized in one way, and I in another; I think one person a fit subject to receive that ordinance, and he thinks differently; we should not suffer that to mar our peace. He may prefer one mode of church government, and I another; this need not offend either of us, or separate brothers. He believes that none but learned men should preach the gospel, I think otherwise; this should not interrupt our harmony. In these little things we may differ innocently, and love one another.

But how is it in the weightier matters of the law—*judgement, mercy, and faith?*—Are we united in our sentiments respecting the most prominent features of our holy religion?

Instance first. *The law of God.* This cannot be considered a small matter—a subject of minor importance. Are there no conflicting opinions among us respecting God's holy

law? We dare not say so; our written words, and public declarations will condemn us.—There are many christians who contend that as we are not under the law, but under grace, we are not bound to observe the commandments of God. “Christ, they say, is the end of the *law* for righteousness to every one that believeth.”* They even declare *that no man can keep the law.*†

Others affirm that we are virtually bound to keep the laws of God, and give the highest authority for their opinion, even Christ, who says, “think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.”‡ Those who are of a different opinion, view this declaration as applicable to Christ, and him alone—they say he came to fulfil the law perfectly, which he has done in his own person, therefore we are exonerated. Others affirm that this cannot be his meaning exclusively, for he adds in the following verse, “whosoever therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so; he shall be

* Rom. x. 4.

† In the constitution of the Presbyterian church, as amended and ratified by the General Assembly, at their sessions in May, 1821, we find the following question and answer.—Page 268, Phil. edition 1827.

“Q. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. *No man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them in thought, word and deed.*”

‡ Matth. v. 17.

least in the kingdom of heaven; *but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*"

And further, they say, that Christ preached the law to one, who inquired what he should do to inherit eternal life.* They also bring Paul to prove the validity of the law, and the obligations christians are under to keep it. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; *yea, we establish the law.*"†

Thus we perceive there is an extensive and extraordinary division in the church respecting one of the most important principles in theology. If we appeal to the people of the world, and inquire, is there a diversity of sentiments among your respectable citizens, about the necessity of keeping the laws of the land? They reply *no, none*; every respectable citizen regards the law of the land as sacred—its obligations as imperious and universal; and all who transgress or violate its precepts, are promptly punished and disgraced. Yet the respectable part of the community are not under its dominion; it was not made for them; they live above its iron grasp; they intrude not upon its boundaries; they tread not on its forbidden soil. In the church, when one asserts that no man can keep the law; another who thinks differently, asks the respectable man of the world what would be said of your rulers, if they were to enact laws, which their subjects, or constituents *could not keep*. The

* Mark x. 19.

† Rom. iii. 31.

reply is, "they would be hurled from their stations and authority; they would meet the universal contempt of all mankind." Surely this is a *dark coloured sign*, one that should alarm our fears, were we not like the infatuated Jews, blinded by prejudice.

Christians are not even united in their sentiments respecting the broad, honourable, exalted principle of *Justice*. Some really believe and declare in the language of the wise king of Israel, that "there is not a *just* man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not."* They give this passage a general application, and include the righteous with the wicked.

Others think differently, and say the wise man's declaration only refers to the unregenerate, which is the natural state of all mankind since the fall. They very rationally believe that there can be no collision in the word of God; and in opposition to the construction given to the above text, they instance Solomon's own words in another place. "*The hope of the unjust man perisheth.*"† And also the words of a greater than Solomon, who says, "*He that is unjust in the least, is also unjust in much.*"‡ And God's word expressly declares, that the unjust will be reserved until the day of judgement to be punished; consequently if there is none just, all must be condemned in the judgement day. They contend that such a sentiment, sinks the christian character below the standard of

* Eccl. vii. 20.

† Prov. xi. 7.

‡ Luko xvi. 10.

the heathens; and instance the reply of the populace to the proposition of Themistocles, without knowing what it was; having been told by Aristides, that nothing could be more advantageous to the state, but nothing could be more *unjust*; their unanimous voice was, “*Let justice prevail, if the pillars of heaven should fall.*” This sentiment was expressed by those who knew not God; who had never heard of the name of Jesus Christ, much less the doctrines and precepts which he taught. Nor was it the decision of a few honourable, grey headed fathers in Greece; but it was the sentiment and voice of the populace.

That a sign darker than the heathens displayed, should wave on a christian temple, cannot reflect much honour upon Christ, or his church on earth.

There is another principle of infinite importance to the people of God, about which christians materially differ in their sentiments, viz: *Purity, or holiness of heart, or christian perfection.* Some are violently opposed to it, and hold up both hands against such a heresy; what, say they, “a man *perfect in this life—live without sin while we are in the flesh!* Impossible.” They appeal to the beloved apostle who leaned on the breast of his divine master, who says, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”*

Others contend that the Saviour expressly

* 1 John i. 8.

enjoined this honourable doctrine on all his followers, when he said, "*Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*"* They also bring the words of the same beloved disciple, whom their opponents have made to speak in behalf of that principle, which drove our first parents from Eden, and darkened and deranged every feature of the soul, as well as every soul of man, as a witness for the divine principle of holiness—He says, "He that hath this hope in him *purifieth himself even as he is pure.*" *The standard by which this point is to be determined could be no higher.* Again: "*He that committeth sin is of the Devil.*"† They say, if John's declaration in the first chapter and eighth verse, means what their opponents say it does, then the inspired writer plainly contradicts himself. They also insist that the doctrine of holiness is reasonable, and can alone honour God, and render man happy. They refer to the unregenerate part of mankind, and ask the honourable man of the world, which would you rather part with, all your property and money, or your fair and unblemished reputation? He replies, "Sir, do you intend to insult me? take every thing on earth, property, friends, money, and health; but *leave me an unsullied character.*" Nor is there any conflicting sentiments among respectable people without the pale of the church, on this important point.

* Matth. v. 48.

† 1 John iii. 4. 7, 8.

One who spent his time, and prostrated his superior talents in the cause of vice, says, "Who steals my purse, steals trash—'twas mine—'tis his—and has been slave to thousands; but he who filches me of my good name, robs me of that which not enriches him, but makes me poor indeed."

But in the church, one pleads for the existence of a little sin, which he calls *inbred corruption*. The other will not admit of one stain, declaring with the inspired writer, that we are *now* the sons of God, and rationally contends, that by an undeviating law of nature, children always resemble their parents; and if we bear the moral image of our heavenly Father, there can be no shade of *sin* found in any part of the picture. They appeal to parents of refined and noble feelings, and ask them, would you be pleased to know, or think that your lovely daughter was not entirely honourable and virtuous? The parents are indignant, and reply, "No, our daughter must not only be virtuous, but she must be above suspicion." They then ask their opponents in the church, must the children of poor dying mortals be *unsullied and unsuspected*, and must the children of the Most High God, while they remain in this world, continue to be stained with the black blot of sin?

Thus it may clearly be perceived, that there are not only divisions among christians, about subjects of minor importance, but about

the most important principles of our holy religion, and the most prominent features in the christian character; that their diversified sentiments obtain to a greater extent, and have caused greater excitement among professors of religion, than corresponding principles have produced without the pale of the church.

Nor are we more united in our sentiments respecting the character of God himself. Some contend that the Saviour made an atonement for only part of the human family—that all for whom Christ died must be saved, the number being so definite that it can neither be increased nor diminished; others positively declare that he died for all mankind—that *all* may be saved, if they will.

These last urge, that if all for whom Christ died must be saved, all for whom he did not die, must be damned; that they were as completely the objects of God's reprobating decree, or wrath, when they smiled in innocence in their mothers arms, as when they had accumulated the weight of three score years of sin and guilt upon their hoary heads. They further contend, that no savage would consign an innocent babe to eternal fire—that it would be more merciful in God to cut off the reprobate children in infancy, than to permit them to live in sin, and then punish them for their crimes.

Nearly all orthodox christians believe, that God will punish eternally all who do not re-

pent and believe the gospel; but if there is, or ever was, one on earth for whom Christ did not die—for whom no atonement was made, that man must be damned eternally for not doing that which it was completely out of his power to perform, which would be not only *cruel*, but *tyrannical in the extreme*.

Hence we not only darken and distort our own features by our discord, but we cast a shade of deformity over the character of Jehovah. Surely these *signs* are dark, and indicate a coming storm of destruction. These are not things of minor importance. It is time to lay our prejudices aside—too many of us have wrapt ourselves around with that unholy garment, which renders us insensible to every argument of truth and reason, that opposes our preconceived opinions. We should not vainly suppose that we alone are right, and all others are wrong; this would be bigotry in its crudest shape.

It is very much to be feared however that the church is not only defective in the important principles of *union* and *love*; but other *signs* of a darker complexion are visible to the naked eye; that blemishes less excusable may be discovered upon very slight investigation.

Have we kept ourselves from an unholy connexion with the enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ? Or have we indeed been divided among ourselves, and united with our enemies? It is of the utmost importance that the

righteous and the wicked should be separate and distinct from each other—that there should be a clear and definite line of demarkation drawn between them. In the common transactions of life, we are under the necessity of mixing with the wicked; were it not so, Paul says, and experience confirms the fact, we should have to go out of the world; but to associate with them unnecessarily, is inadmissible by the Great Head of the church. This important point, or boundary line, must be determined by *God's word*, regulated by reason, and common sense. The language of inspiration is, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them; and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”* Other passages of God's word might be referred to, but this will doubtless be sufficient, seeing it is so reasonable, and perfectly in accordance with every refined feeling of every honourable heart.

* 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

It is only necessary to apply this principle to ourselves, and we will in a moment discover how absurd the custom of amalgamation must be to every respectable character, or reflecting mind. How would the honourable and affectionate parents be pleased to learn that their amiable, and accomplished, and beautiful daughter, was occasionally in the habit of associating with dissolute and abandoned characters. I have known ladies greatly insulted, because they were measurably compelled to take a seat in the church, near a female of dissolute character, or one who was tinged with coloured blood.

Those who associate together, uniformly bear the same character; nor is the grade allowed to them in the public estimation, taken from the fairest of the flock, or those of a mixed complexion, but from the darkest colour, and most inferior sample. If a person is known to have only one tinge of coloured blood in his veins, he is invariably classed in the negro population. The Jews were positively prohibited from forming any connexions, or having any direct intercourse with the Gentiles; nor can we for a moment suppose that God's house, his church on earth, under the darker dispensation of the law, was more pure than it should be under the milder, brighter rays of the gospel.

The objector may say, our Saviour himself mixed with publicans and sinners, for which the fastidious Jews found great fault

with him. We may associate with them on the same terms, and for the same purpose, viz: to do them good. We may mix with the wicked as the physician mingles with his patients, to administer to their necessities, that they may be restored to health. The wicked are afflicted with a dreadful disease, more contagious and dangerous than the yellow fever, or small-pox. Would parents be willing that their children should visit an apartment, or house where those diseases were raging? They would not; nor would any judicious person voluntarily enter such an apartment, unless he was impelled by the imperious command of duty, or the constraining voice of mercy.

Has the church of Christ kept herself from unhallowed and disgraceful connexions with the world? Alas for her; here we shall have to weep over some of her darkest stains. From the time the cross of Christ was identified with the Roman eagles under Constantine, the church began to wither; her white folds were soiled by the touch of earthly honour, and her beautiful aspect was darkened by the king's embrace. The kingdoms and thrones of this world, became measurably amalgamated with the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth, until the glory of the latter became partially buried under the rubbish of pompous titles—Pope, Prelate, Cardinal, &c. &c. Fortunately for the world and the church, after a long night of gloomy

darkness, which continued for more than twelve centuries, a luminary appeared in Germany, that may be termed the first morning star of the millennial day. By the light emanating from this and other luminaries which appeared about the same time, the gross darkness, which had so long enveloped the church, was rendered visible; and many of those pollutions were swept away by the extraordinary efforts of Luther and others.

The church then began to come up out of the wilderness leaning on the arm of the Holy One of Israel, displaying some of her native and youthful loveliness. She protested peremptorily, and righteously, against the corruptions of the times, and was successful beyond the expectation of her warmest friends. But the church was not yet to escape from the wilderness, and entirely to emerge from the gloom by which she was surrounded.—For soon there was an unholy, and unnatural alliance formed between the renovated church and the kingdoms of this world. The Protestant Church was not only defiled, but enervated and deformed by the impotent arm of an earthly king thrown around her beautiful form.

Since the reformation many burning and shining lights have appeared in the church. About a century ago, one of unusual brilliancy arose in Great Britain, and diffused its light throughout the kingdom, and across the Atlantic Ocean, until our western hemisphere

has been every where lighted up with its diverging rays.

During the last half century, an unusual and unparalleled degree of light and prosperity, which is daily widening and increasing, has marked the progress of the church of Christ. Within that period, but particularly in the years only recently gone by, not only has a great revolution taken place in religion, but a great reformation also. Yet on examination we will find, even in this day of increased light and privilege, much dark mixture, and many unholy and reprehensible connexions with our enemies. What is our real condition? We should be honest with ourselves. Instance the most prosperous and efficient arm of the church in this day; the different societies, and associations for the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth; the *Bible Societies*, the *Missionary*, the *Tract and Sabbath School Societies*, &c. Christians of all denominations, both patronize and identify themselves with those societies. They consider it an honour and privilege of no ordinary magnitude to do so. And are not all classes of people, however haughty or wicked their character may be, admitted into these associations; and if they are wealthy and honourable in the estimation of the world, they are eligible to the highest stations of dignity and honour in the gift of the society.

It is well known that these important associations, have been stained and dishonoured

with the presence and feigned embrace of earthly kings, and lords, as well as with the friendship and union of the wicked from the lower circles in life. Thus the sanctuary of the Lord has been polluted by the introduction of sinners into that sacred place. Is this not a more unguarded connexion with the world and the sons of Belial, than the church was guilty of in darker days? Do not birds of a feather flock together; I have already adverted to the general sentiment of mankind respecting mixed companies; the lowest, blackest grade, will give the tone to, and fix the character of the whole. Will the High and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is *Holy*, thank us for opening his house for the reception of such guests? If I am not desperately deceived, I love the church of Christ, and feel a deep interest in her real prosperity, and would be glad to set at the feet of the least child or servant in my Father's house, to learn a lesson of *love* and humility from him; yet I have too high a regard for the dignity and honour of Christ's church,—my Father's house and family on earth, to associate myself voluntarily with the sons of night, with the children of the devil, or to see others whom I love, do so, and not raise my warning voice against such reprehensible conduct.

It is said, however, "that great good is effected by this liberal arrangement,—money is secured from the wicked, and applied to

holy purposes, that would otherwise be wasted in dissipation and folly—it is much better we should have it and cast it into the treasury of the Lord.” The case of Saul and the Amalekites should not be forgotten. The King of Israel was so zealous for the honour of his God, that he disregarded his plain command, that he might have *himself the honour*, of offering the Almighty a *large and respectable* sacrifice. It was the cause of his rejection, and final destruction. God is not dependant on man, much less the favours, of his enemies, the wicked, to accomplish his purposes. The only question to be decided is, is it honourable? Does it comport with the dignity of the church and the glory of God, and is it pleasing in his sight? If not—those who think they may do evil that good may come, at least hazard much.

It is said that these societies cannot be considered in the same light with the church, therefore the Lord’s sanctuary is not defiled by the introduction of sinners into them. They must have some specific character—their complexion is either white or black; they are either on the Lord’s side, or for the enemy. If they are identified with religion, we do wrong to connect sinners with them; if they are not decidedly for the Lord and his cause, then do we greatly err, by identifying ourselves with them and the children of this world, of whom they are in part composed. An honourable man will not be

ashamed of his companions wherever he may meet them.

If I associate and mingle with a certain class of people in their own neighbourhood and at their own residence, but when I meet them at the king's palace, or the President's drawing room, because they are coarse, unpolished, and uncouth in their manners, profane and vulgar in their language, and ignorant in their character, I am ashamed of them, and pretend not to know who they are; I act a deceptious and dishonourable part. The honest man will recognise and acknowledge his *companions*, and *associates*, in any place, or before any company on earth. And if they are slighted, he is as much offended as if the insult had been offered to him in person. How shall we meet those individuals at the judgement bar, with whom we identified ourselves here, *knowing their character?* and then hear the Judge say, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Will we not as honourable people, step forth, and say, "hold, these are my friends and companions, they must be received into heaven with us, or we will go with them into the lake of unquenchable fire."

Mixed companies will not do. Hear the sentiments of a servant of the Lord, under the dark Jewish dispensation, respecting this evil. "For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons; *so that*

*the holy seed have mixed themselves with the people of those lands; yea, the hand of the princes and rulers, hath been chief in this trespass. And when I heard this thing I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head, and of my beard, and sat down astonished.”**

Another prophet expresses the same sentiments, and makes the same bitter complaint against those abominations. “In those days also, saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab; and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak the Jews language, but according to the language of each people.

And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.”†

It may be said, the evil complained of by these holy men of Israel, was principally, that their countrymen intermarried with the heathen—that there are now no heathen, Christ having broken down the middle wall of partition, and says, *now* “There is neither Jew, nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all.”

In reply to this objection, it may be said, that God is the same now that he ever was; that the families of the earth, are now, as

* Ezra ix. 2, 3.

† Neh. xiii. 23, 24, 25.

they ever have been, universally and indiscriminately the objects of God's care and compassion, and all bear the same relation to their great Creator, whether marked with a black or a white complexion.

The things which were written to, and enjoined on the Jews, were written for our instruction. The Gentile world bore the same relation to God's people then, that the wicked bear now to the righteous. Nor can we for a moment suppose that Christ has opened his Father's house and kingdom for the reception of vicious, or polluted characters. In reference to marrying with the heathen, we are deeply implicated in the unnatural, and dishonourable custom; but so dark is our complexion, and blind our eyes, that we cannot, or will not see the turpitude of the crime. There must be a greater difference between a child of God, and a child of the devil, than there is between a *white* and *black person*.

Propose a union between the wealthy parent's accomplished daughter, and a black negro, and you will then find how the amalgamation system will be received.

Nearly the whole process now in operation for the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth, differs widely from the movements of our Divine Master, and his disciples; and in every way we can view the change it is *against us*. The first missionaries of Jesus Christ, had no societies to pro-

vide silver and gold for them; they went forth into a wicked heathen world, and planted the gospel standard among their bitter enemies, who were fortified with prejudice and iniquity against the efforts and arguments of the poor despised followers of Jesus; yet under these gloomy, and apparently desperate circumstances, they were successful; they conquered their enemies with the sword of the spirit, with *love*. Those poor despised veterans of the cross, who were naked, and buffeted, and had no certain dwelling place—but were exposed to hunger and thirst, and labour and toil; who were reviled and persecuted, and defamed, and made as the filth and offscouring of all things, not only conquered the prejudice and enmity of the heathen, but took back to the poor saints at Jerusalem, pecuniary aid received from the heathen.*

Nor was this contribution raised by public collection; it was given exclusively by the disciples.

At this time the world is greatly enlightened and softened by the influence of christianity; and does it now require so much money to support the gospel, or send it to foreign lands, that the professed followers of Jesus Christ cannot supply it? Must we call upon the enemies of the cross to aid in pulling down the strong holds of their liege Sovereign? Should we not more than suspect that there is something rotten in the Church

* Acts xi. 29.

of Christ? Have we not good ground to fear, that when the great Head of the Church comes to examine, and finish the building, he will take down the scaffolding and cast it into the fire? *The signs of the times are truly ominous*, and should be alarming to the friends of Zion.

We are not dependent on the wicked, either for their opinion or their money. Let the children of God act a faithful and honourable part, and they will find that their Father's arm is not shortened; neither has his nature changed; he can and will deliver his people; but if they do not act honourably, he will cast them out of his sight.

I am convinced that much more might be done within the pale of the church than we are now doing. It is mortifying in the extreme to see the church become an object of commiseration to the wicked. We must act independently of the pecuniary aid of the unregenerate, *or we must fall*. The enemies of the cross may, and will smile in prosperity; but they may also, and will assuredly, stab in adversity.

Were we careful to bring into active operation the sinews of the church; and lop off all our excesses, the kingdom of this world would very soon fall before us, and speedily become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. A minister of the gospel, within the bounds of the Virginia conference, in the past year, has travelled about three thousand

miles on foot, and preached generally six times a week. His entire expenses (exclusive of postage) did not amount to ten dollars. Nor was it a desperate effort on his part; for the last four or five years, his movements have been nearly the same. His numerous and kind friends cheerfully gave him his food and raiment, with which every follower of Jesus Christ should be satisfied.

The church of Jesus Christ, when undorned with earthly honours, is most adorned. The power, and wisdom, and friendship of kings and potentates, however abundantly, and freely bestowed, only enervate, and deform, and betray the church into the hands of her enemies, which must result in shame and disappointment. How very different was the real state of the Laodicean church, from what they vainly supposed. "Because thou sayest I am *rich*, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me *gold tried in the fire*, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see."*

The poor insulted, oppressed, degraded Jews, who have been scattered over the face of the whole earth, by a just God, for their

sins, and have no spot of ground which they can call their own, no altar where they can offer a sacrifice to the God of their Fathers; are far more united in their sentiments, and consistent in their conduct, than we are. Under the most gloomy circumstances—under the severe chastisements of God, they have kept themselves separate from the Gentile world. Generally speaking, their garments have not been stained by associating illegally with others.

In better days, and under more auspicious circumstances, they were unable, and unprepared to meet their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, when he appeared among them clothed in humanity and surrounded with poverty.

And do we vainly imagine, that we shall be able to meet him at his second coming, when he will no doubt appear in grandeur and great glory?

Since there is such a striking likeness between the church and the world—for in many particulars they are so closely connected, and very frequently, their complexion is so much alike, that mortal eyes and human judgement, cannot distinguish one from the other; we may be pardoned for noticing a few of the *signs*, which are apparent in the christian world at the present time.

The christian world, may be limited to the boundaries of Europe and America, and may include rather more than one fourth part of

the inhabitants of the earth. The greatest part of this extensive space, in a moral or religious sense, may be considered as completely shrouded in darkness. Spain, Portugal, and Italy, present a picture of vice and treachery—of superstition, bigotry and oppression. France is very little better than a nursery of infidelity, where vanity and dissipation reign predominant from the least to the greatest. In Germany and the surrounding states, there may be more religious light than in any other part of continental Europe; yet the picture is gloomy indeed. Nearly all the north of Europe is far removed from the principles of righteousness, and deeply involved in ignorance on religious subjects.

England presents the fairest portion of the Eastern hemisphere; but alas, how gloomy the scene even there. A large portion of her population oppressed, and in extreme poverty, are suffering by the pride and extravagance of her rulers, while a restless spirit of vice and wickedness pervades nearly the whole kingdom.

Leaving the old world, mantled deep in the shades of night, we turn our eyes to the western continent, where, with the exception of the United States and Canada, all presents a dreary gloomy moral waste of ignorance and vice. It may be said, however, without fear of successful contradiction, that the United States form the garden spot of the christian world. What *signs* are displayed

to view in this fair and favoured country? As a nation we are blessed with civil and religious liberty, a boon which cannot be too highly prized. The inhabitants of this happy land have a constitution and government, which guarantees to them, (as far as earthly ties can secure any object) their civil and religious privileges. In the bill of rights, which precedes and accompanies the constitution, the following solemn and important declaration is made, and forms the first sentence. “We hold these truths to be self-evident. *All men are created equal—they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*”

This broad declaration, and truly honourable sentiment, we hold up triumphantly to the inspection of heaven; and to all the countries, and kingdoms, and states on the earth, soliciting them *to read and admire*. We then turn within ourselves, and place the ponderous foot of power on the rights and privileges of a large minority of our own citizens, because they are guilty of being covered with a skin, differing in colour from our own, and emphatically say—“*You shall not taste the cup of liberty—you shall not inhale one free breath.*” What must the God who reigns on high, and surveys all the actions of men, and is acquainted with the secret thoughts of our hearts, and numbers the hairs of our heads, who regards with equal eye as Lord

of all, both the black man and the white, say of such conduct? Nay, what must all reflecting honest men think of us? Do we not write our real name in characters too plain to be misunderstood by the most illiterate? The inscription will bear no varied or extenuating construction. *Hypocrisy and falsehood* are the best that can be made of it. We hear much said about liberty, and equality, and justice, and honour, and our numerous religious institutions, which have all of them engraven on their exterior, *tender mercy and brotherly love*. The next moment our eyes are met in the high-way that leads to the southern and western country, by a band of human beings, for whom our Saviour died; *chained fast together*, and driven like horses or cattle to the best market? In this land of liberty, of bibles, and of religion, *little children* are set up at auction, and sold from their mothers' arms. Wives and husbands are torn asunder, and sold for money, never to see or hear of each other again this side of eternity!

Surely, in no heathen land on earth, are there blacker signs of iniquity to be seen; and yet our political creed is—“*Liberty—Equality—Justice—Honour.*—There is no King—no Tyrant here—no oppression is found in all our peaceful, happy borders.”

Nor are we, who wear, inscribed on our phylacteries—“*Do unto all, as ye would have them do unto you; Love your neighbour as*

yourself," free from these *signs*, and wonders, and evils, dark and foreboding as they are. It is only necessary to look at those precepts, recorded in God's book, by which we must be judged in the great decisive day, and ask ourselves honestly, what would be our feelings and conduct, were our wives sold and driven away before our eyes, and our little ones set up and sold at auction to the highest bidder? It will not bear reflection—the picture is too dark for contemplation; and gladly would I throw a veil of oblivion over these gloomy scenes which have no parallel in the heathen lands; but I dare not. Shall the watchman be silent, and fold up his arms when there is danger? when he discovers an enemy in the streets ready to set fire to, and burn up the city, can he justify himself by saying, the people can see it without being alarmed by my cry? Not so, we must all perish together, if we are unfaithful. I love your souls, and fear my God, who has condescended to place me on the walls of Zion, as a watchman to the house of Israel; let us attend to what the Lord our God says to the watchman and his charge: "Son of man speak to the children of thy people and say unto them, when I bring the sword upon the land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman; if, when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet and warn the people; then whosoever

heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet and took not warning, his blood shall be upon him; but he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take away any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; *but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.* So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”*

Do you inquire what can be done for this unfortunate and degraded people? “The evil is sensibly felt, and we smart under its wound.” I know you do, and sincerely sympathise with you; but the christian’s circumstances are never desperate.

Israel’s God, is the christian’s Father; his arm is not shortened; his ear is not heavy; his nature is not changed; he ever delighteth to do his needy creatures good; he is ever near to deliver us out of all our troubles.

* Ezekiel xxxiii. 2d, to the 8th.

Had we only an arm of flesh to depend on, our condition would be indeed desperate. If we are only honest, and sincere, God will deliver us; and he will do it as he makes our corn, when, and not before, we have done our part. Let us then, as children of God, inquire, have we consulted together as brethren, and made our difficulties known to the church, earnestly requesting their counsel and their prayers in this important business? If we have not, there must be a want of moral honesty, and our Father must be justly offended. But if we have exhausted our own resources, and have applied to our brethren, and the church in vain; have we resorted to our country's wisdom? have we petitioned the Legislature to aid us by their wisdom in removing this evil from us and our children? If we have neglected to use the means, do we expect God will make windows in heaven and rain down bread into our laps? If we can find no relief from our brethren, or the church, or our country, there is at least one plan that has been devised, and has been extensively patronized by the people of the world; if no better can be adopted, should we not aid with all our strength the Colonization Society?

They have planted a little colony of this unfortunate portion of our population on the shores of Africa, in the land of their forefathers, shrouded in heathen darkness, and hitherto almost impervious to the light of

heaven; thus promising a double benefit, each of the highest importance. So far this humane and laudable scheme has succeeded admirably. The only obstacle in its way to great prosperity and usefulness, is the want of funds.

Shall we who profess to love our neighbour as ourselves, sit down to eat and drink, and like the thoughtless Jews, rise up to play, or to consult our own pleasure, while such appeals are made to us from Africa; from her injured and oppressed children in our own borders; from the unregenerate world, from heaven and earth, and our own future safety and happiness? Surely this is not the way to gain relief, or to secure the smiles and aid of heaven. Christ says, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out." Were we only to cut off every excess in eating, and drinking, and wearing apparel, and from our costly houses and furniture, much more might be done for this important cause. Those indulgencies only impair our health, destroy our peace, and feed the unholy flame of pride. The great condemnation to us will be, that we have not made an honest, and a mighty effort to relieve our brethren in disgrace and bondage. They are our brethren; Christ will acknowledge them if they keep his commandments and love him, as his *Mother—Sister—Brother*.*

* Matth. xii. 50.

If our brother and his family were taken captive by a savage enemy, and doomed to slavery, but might be redeemed by the payment of a certain amount of money, and we were seen to throw our money in the fire, what would an impartial judge say of us? Every cent we expend to gratify our appetite, or to please the eye exclusively, is thrown into the fire, to feed the flame of pride, while our brethren are in abject bondage, and the humane are calling aloud for funds to alleviate their sufferings, and to elevate them into human beings—yea, even into sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. The prophet who was greatly beloved of the Lord, when his brethren were in captivity in a strange land, mourned and prayed to his God in their behalf, *and eat no pleasant food.*—God heard his prayer, and delivered the Jews from Babylonish captivity. Let us imitate his pious example. Many of us go half way—we can pray,—*but to eat no pleasant food*, is a hard saying, who can bear it? Israel's God is our God; he is a prayer hearing God; but to be heard by him, we must lift up holy hands; we must do all in our power. But if we say and do not, God will neither hear nor answer our prayers. One thing should not be forgotten; God who cannot lie, has promised to hear the cry of the needy, and declares that they shall not always be forgotten. Under existing circumstances, can we eat and drink the best the land and our con-

dition in life will afford, and share those bounties among our rich and respectable neighbours and friends, and read in that book from which we shall be judged, in the presence of those who were once our slaves, “*When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, or thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen or thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee; but when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind; and thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just!*”*

Will our servants bear testimony in our favour at the judgement bar, that we have carefully observed this injunction? and will the poor widows and orphans rise up and bless us, and confirm their testimony? If not, how can the righteous Judge say, “*Well done good and faithful servant,*” to us who have not been such characters?

When we shall have reached the eternal world, and behold some characters there who were our slaves on earth, but there elevated to a kingdom and a crown; is it reasonable to suppose that we shall meet them under such circumstances with pleasing delight, and honestly say—“I rejoice to see you; I sympathised with you in our probationary state—I did every thing in my power to enlighten your minds—to elevate your condition, and

* Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14.

to aid you on your journey to the paradise of God." This thought deserves our serious consideration.

To return to that part of the unregenerate world under review. What further *signs* are discernable in our political horizon? Have all our Presidents, who have been elevated to the head of this christian nation, been holy, God-fearing men? Is such the character of the Governors of the individual states generally? Are a majority of those who compose our general and state Legislatures, humble, faithful followers of our Lord Jesus Christ? The *signs* here, we fear, are of a dark complexion. As it regards our general government, the members who compose both houses of Congress, fill the most exalted and dignified temporal stations on earth, and are engaged in making laws for, and regulating the concerns of a large, free and prosperous nation, distinguished by a christian name, who acknowledge the God of heaven, and him only, as their *Sovereign*. Yet we are compelled to witness, by their express orders and command, the laws of Almighty God openly profaned in every part of our wide spread country. The mail is hurried through our christian land on the holy sabbath day, with as much zeal and activity, as on any other day in the week. Nor has the frequent, humble, and pressing petition of a very large and respectable portion of their constituents, laid before the Senate and House of Repre-

sentatives, had any effect on their impious course. Under such circumstances, less cannot be said of them than was said of the unjust Judge, "He neither feared God, nor regarded man."

We rejoice, however, to see, that some of our state Governors respect themselves, and the character of their country, by reminding their constituents of their dependence on Almighty God, in appointing a day of fasting and prayer, that God would bless and prosper the labour of the husbandmen; and by publicly proclaiming a day of thanksgiving when the crop is gathered in. This *sign* has a favourable aspect, and should be hailed as an omen of future greatness and prosperity.

But on the other hand, some of our Legislative bodies refuse to honour God so far as to suffer his ministering servants to offer up one petition for them, or their constituents, in their presence.

These *signs* are gloomy, and indicative of coming ruin; nor are they confined to the head only. Perhaps no nation on earth has ever made as rapid advances in extravagance and dissipation as we have done, agreeably to our age. It may be said, other nations were not so prosperous, nor as much enlightened. Be it so, but with the *Bible* in our hands, this forms a very awkward apology.

From the signs of the times already noticed, the millenium, or Christ's second coming must be at the very door; a very few

years more, must disclose that glorious day to open view before our eyes: but from the signs found in God's word, and those plainly inferible from his dealings with others in days gone by, and from the present state of society, it does not require a spirit of prophecy to see a gathering storm of divine wrath, which must burst with greater vengeance on mankind, and particularly the church, than has ever been seen or felt yet on earth, before the glorious Son of Righteousness arises, to dispel forever the gloomy night of sin and iniquity.

The character and condition of the Israelites have been already adverted to; there can be no doubt but they were a people more united in their sentiments and feelings, when the Holy One of Israel appeared among them as their Saviour, than the church is now; and as moral, or more so, than the christian world is at this time. They were not, however, prepared to receive him. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." They cast him from them, and crucified the Son of God; consequently the heavy judgments of the Lord fell on them. Perhaps their sufferings were greater when their country was overrun and destroyed by the Roman armies, than any other people have ever yet experienced.

It is reasonable to expect and believe, that our sufferings will be as much greater than theirs were, as our privileges and iniquities

will be found to exceed theirs. Although it will be universally admitted, that our light and privileges very far exceed theirs; yet very few will admit, or believe that our sins are as black as theirs were. It is said *they* murdered the Son of God, and prayed that his blood might be upon them and their children. This is certainly true, and constitutes a species of iniquity, of the extent of which the mind of man can form no correct idea. They, however, did this awful deed *ignorantly*. Our Redeemer on the cross, prayed, "*Father forgive them, they know not what they do.*" Correctly speaking, *sin* was the cause of Christ's death; the Jews were the active agents in this dreadful deed. Every sin *we* commit under the Gospel rays, tends to *drive the nails afresh into the Saviour's hands*. Paul speaks of certain characters, who crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame; this, they did by their sins—every wilful sinner therefore is guilty of the death of Jesus Christ; we do it wickedly, and knowingly—the Jews did it maliciously, but ignorantly. Which are the worst?

God is the same, yesterday, to-day and forever, impartial in all his ways, and dealings to the human family.

If our crimes are greater than those perpetrated by the Jews, and our light and privileges are greater than theirs were; it is reasonable to suppose that our punishment, even in this world must exceed theirs. Our divine

master declared to the Jews, that it should be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement, than for them; because (it is presumable) their advantages were so much greater than those enjoyed by the Sodomites.

The Jews were daily, and earnestly praying for the immediate appearance of their promised Messiah; patriarchs and prophets had designated the time—the period they all believed to be at hand; hence they were not only praying, but anxiously, and hourly looking for his appearance. But behold when the time arrived—when the long expected, and promised Messiah came, they were almost universally disappointed; the advent of their Redeemer into the world, was the prelude to their destruction. They were completely deceived—not by the God of their fathers, but by their own folly, and their proud perverse hearts. Like poor, proud, fallen man, they were gazing up—expecting no doubt, a display of unparalleled pomp and grandeur, in their expected Deliverer—They stumbled at the Stumbling Stone, and Rock of Offence.

Their eyes were blinded by the God of this world, and when they expected peace and deliverance, at that hour sudden destruction came upon them. They were inflated with pride, and shrouded in prejudice, which made them bold and confident in their errors; and to this day, the veil is on their hearts, and completely darkens their minds. We are

men of like passions with them, and equally liable to be deceived. Although we do enjoy a much greater degree of light than they were favoured with, yet we should remember that impressive expression of our divine Master—“If the light that is in thee, be darkness, how great is that darkness.” This state seems very strikingly to mark our condition in the present day. The great light, which is shining and increasing, in place of drawing us more closely together, the natural effect of religion, appears only to separate us farther from each other. New theories, and new parties are springing up on every hand; our situation resemble measurably the condition of the Jews when there was no king in Israel, and every one did that which was right in his own eyes. Almost every branch of the church has suffered more or less from a restless aspiringspirit; even the quiet peaceable Friends, have recently experienced a severe wound from the demon of discord.

But neither God's dealings with his ancient people, nor the deplorable state of the church, and christian world at this time, would be sufficient data to ground an opinion upon, that the people of Christendom, but particularly the church, will experience more awful judgements and calamities, than any other people on earth have yet seen or felt, previous to the rising of the millennial Sun, if God's written word did not sanction the hypothesis. The Holy Scriptures must be our infallible

guide in all cases. To the law, and to the testimony. What signs are perceptible in those divine oracles?

In reference to the day under consideration, our Saviour gives us a solemn caution.—“Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come upon you unawares”—and then makes this impressive declaration—“*For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.*”* Again he says, “But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be; for as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.”† It has already been shown that this prediction could not refer exclusively to the destruction of Jerusalem—the end of the Jewish nation and polity, or the final judgement day. The event to which he compares the approaching day, swept all away with the besom of destruction, but one family. Surely this declaration should awaken us all to serious reflection, and self-examination. “Who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire and fuller’s soap.” St. Paul in his writing to the

* Luke xxi 34, 35.

† Matth. xxiv. 37, 38, 39

church of Thessalonica, says, "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you; for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord *so cometh as a thief in the night; for when they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.*"*

There are many expressive, comprehensive and alarming predictions in the Old Testament, relative to this great day.

"A noise shall come, even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations; he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. *And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day, from one end of the earth, even unto the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground. Howl ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock; for the days of your slaughter, and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape.*"†

Another prediction by the same pathetic

* Thes. v. 1, 2, 3.

† Jer. xxv. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

prophet, while it affords great encouragement to the natural descendants of Abraham, wears an alarming aspect when it is applied to the other nations of the earth. "For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee; *though I make a full end of all nations*, whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."* The same sentiments are expressed in almost the same words.† The language of another prophet of Israel, is very expressive, and refers directly to the great events pointed to by his brethren. "*Behold at that time I will undo all that afflict thee*, and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise, and fame in every land, where they have been put to shame."‡

The signs exhibited in the Apocalypse are generally shrouded in great mystery. Most of the Protestant divines, who have written on this difficult and obscure part of God's word, have confined nearly all the judgments and awful denunciations contained therein, to the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church; and suppose that many of the great events described, are already past; it may be so; that corrupt church will no doubt have to drink deep of the wine of God's wrath, which will be poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation. It is ve-

* Jer xxx. ii.

† Jer. xlviii. 28.

‡ Zep. iii. 14

probable, however, that those awful judgments and calamities, will yet be revealed against the whole church, including all the different branches, with great fury, previous to the introduction of universal righteousness.

In treading on this mysterious ground, I am fully aware of the difficulties which will meet me in every direction. I shall, however, only select a few passages in this book, and those only which appear to be immediately connected with the great events under consideration; and offer a few plain, simple, rational thoughts on their import.

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”*

From what is known, and generally believed of the devil's character, he is, and ever has been, disposed to do all the evil in his power; whence then hath he *this increased wrath*? Our probationary term is considered a state of warfare; Satan leads the enemy's van, and commands the legions with whom we have to contend. It is altogether reasonable to suppose that a just God would not permit us to wage an unequal warfare. Were a strong and healthy man to overcome and beat an invalid, or boy, it would be a disgrace to him. Were Almighty God to suffer the devil to assume no higher ground against those who are enlightened, and enjoy

the advantages of revelation, than against the untaught savages, the conflict would be unequal; they might then overcome their adversary almost without a struggle. But were satan permitted to take the same grounds against the heathens, that he does against civilized and enlightened nations, he would destroy them instantly, as he did the herd of swine, when he was suffered to enter into them. Satan is not only willing and anxious to destroy the swine, but he would in a moment overturn all the works of God's hands, if his chain was not limited. This opinion is at least reasonable, and consistent with the character of Deity.

Taking this view of the subject, it will at once be perceived, that as our privileges are increased, the devil will be permitted to take higher ground against us, will have his chain extended to make the conflict equal; with this exception, however, that in every instance, if we *are faithful*, we must conquer. Jesus Christ, our great deliverer, is on our side, and says, "*my grace is sufficient for you.*" Again, "ye shall not be tempted above that you are able to bear, but in every temptation, he will make a way for our escape."

In the course of the last twenty or thirty years our privileges have been increased in a most extraordinary manner. The important question is, have we improved them? Have they had a tendency to unite, and make us

all of one heart, and of one mind? Have we received generally the mind that was in Christ Jesus. Paul expressly declares, *if we have not the spirit of Christ, we are none of his*. When he was reviled, *he reviled not again*—when he was insulted and *spit upon*, he bore it with dignity and patience; have we that spirit? Is there no word found on our tongue, or feeling fostered in our hearts, contrary to *love*? The followers of Jesus Christ, are not only commanded to love one another—but they must extend that divine principle to their enemies also.

The thought has been already suggested, that the christian church should be in a greater state of perfection *now*, than at any former period of her existence. Christians should be able now to receive and digest strong meat, the food of full grown men in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; they should be able to meet fully every command and every precept of the gospel. *Every link* in the extended chain of our privileges should be faithfully improved; as it is reasonable to suppose our enemy will not lose one link himself, and his must run parallel with ours. What is the fact with regard to the church? Our divine Master asks—“How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another?” He has also given us a plain command, referring to that interrogatory—“*But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Mas-*

*ter, even Christ, and ye are all brethren.”**

In turning our eyes to his servants of the present day, who have received this plain command, what do we see? Do we not see and hear them complimenting one another in the most extravagant manner. In the first annual report of the *general union for promoting the observance of the Christian Sabbath*, now before me, there is appended to the names of the President, Vice-Presidents, Secretaries and Directors of that society, the following titles of distinction; *Rev.—Rt. Rev.—D. D.—L. L. D.—Hon.—Gen.—Col.—Dr.—Esq.* and down as low as *Mr.*—“The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof,” and has commanded them to keep the *Sabbath day holy*; God’s word, however, is not sufficient authority; but surely when such an assemblage of earthly dignitaries speak, all will hear and obey. Let us now for one moment turn to our Master’s little band, or *society*, for the promotion of the gospel throughout the world, and contrast the two parties. They are called—*Peter, John, James, Paul and Barnabas, &c.* O, where do we now find that *humble unassuming simplicity* of character, which marked the primitive christians with such dazzling lustre, and appalling, conquering power? Surely it has fled from the abode of mortals in this day of noise and show.

* Matth. xxii. 8.

Once more. As our chain has recently been extended to such an unparalleled length, it will be prudent to examine a few more of its links. It is our indispensable duty—duty! no, exalted privilege, to *love the Lord with all our heart, strength, soul, and mind*—and that we may the more easily and certainly know whether we do thus love God or not, Christ identifies himself with the least of his brethren, should they be as poor as Lazarus, or as dark skinned as one of our African slaves, and declares that whatever you do to one of them, he will consider as done to himself. After this astonishing declaration, full of condescension, and consolation, it might reasonably be expected that every child, or servant of the *Most High God* on earth, who had ever read or heard it, would uniformly conform to the most rigid rules of self denial and economy. But when the ministers and members of Christ's church, almost universally are known to fare sumptuously, as far as their circumstances will admit of their doing so; and are clothed with purple and fine linen, to almost as great an excess as the children of this world, agreeably to their means, while the Lord Jesus Christ, in the person of his *poor brother, or sister; or mother*, is suffering for food and raiment, it is greatly to be feared, that the increased wrath of our adversary the devil, will sweep us away when the conflict is tried.

“ And the sixth angel poured his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw *three* unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the *dragon*, and out of the mouth of the *beast*, and out of the mouth of the *false prophet*. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.—And he gathered them together into a place called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.”* This passage refers particularly to the Lord’s controversy for Zion. It is called the battle of *God Almighty*. At the commencement of this dreadful conflict—immediately preceding it, three unclean spirits, like frogs, are said to proceed out of the mouth of the *dragon*, and of the *beast*, and of the *false prophet*. Frogs are generally a *useless, noisy, and troublesome* animal. They are most busy at night. When all nature should be hushed into calm and sweet repose, they are croaking, to the great annoyance of all who may be within the sound of their discordant notes. These are expressly said to be the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the

* Rev. xvi. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

kings of the earth, and of the *whole world*. The dark flood of iniquity is disgorged upon the human family, through three different channels.

The names of *Dragon*, *Beast*, *Serpent*, are alternately and unequivocally applied to the devil, in God's word.*

Children always resemble their parents, and inherit their father's name. The wicked are said to be the children of the devil. Christ says—"Ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye will do." Again—"ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"†

As the *devil* is expressly called the *great dragon*,‡ the same appellation may justly be given to the wicked, who are *his children*, but as the term is varied to that of *beast*, there must be a distinction made between them. The name of the beast is as clearly applied to the devil, as that of *dragon*; each of those terms therefore will apply to his children, existing under different circumstances. The *dragon* is considered by some as a fabulous animal, or name, altogether; it is probable, however, that this is not correct, as it is frequently mentioned in the word of God: hence Job says—"I am a brother to *dragons*, and a companion of owls.§

The prophet says, "And thorns shall come

* Gen. ii. 1. 14. Rev. xiii. 9. † John viii 44 Matth. xxii. 33.

‡ Rev. xii. 9. § Job xxx. 29.

up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortress thereof; it shall be a habitation of *dragons*, and a court for owls. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty lands, springs of water; in the habitation of *dragons*, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.*

The beast of the field shall honour me, the *dragons* and the owls; because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. Again, "And I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of *dragons*; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without inhabitant. Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength; thou breakest the heads of the *dragons* in the waters. Speak and say, thus saith the Lord God; behold, "I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, my river is mine own, and I have made it for myself."†

Dragons cannot therefore be considered as altogether fabulous animals, since the sacred scriptures mention them so frequently. They are represented as sea, or amphibious animals; as venomous serpents, inhabiting dreary, gloomy, deserted places; as companions of owls, which are known to be birds of night, always retiring from the light of day. The heathen or pagan world may justly be con-

* Isaiah xxxiv. 13, and xxxv. 7—xliii. 20.

† Jer. ix. 11.—Ps. lxxiv. 13.—Ezek. xxix. 3.—Isaiah xxvii. 1.

sidered the *dragon*, or that part of the devil's children moving in a denser element, and breathing in a darker atmosphere, than the wicked part of mankind in Christendom, or those who are favoured with the light and blessings of the gospel, who must also bear *their father's name when it is varied to that of beast*.

Those terms therefore may be applied alternately to the devil, or his children, or any part or individual of them, at different periods of time, and under varied circumstances, which has been done in the Revelation in many places, without regard to due order or regularity; this manner of writing is practised in the Old and New Testament, and requires a general view of the whole subject and scenes of action, which are ever *present* before their great Author; but cannot be seen or understood by mortals, until the grand drama is closed—until the mystery of God is finished, and the whole scheme of man's salvation is fully developed; then will all those, to us, apparent incoherencies and mysteries, be made plain and beautiful to our enraptured vision, and form a theme of wonder and admiration through boundless eternity.

Hence it is not surprising that those wise and learned divines, who have attempted to systematize and illustrate the prophecies, particularly those contained in the Apocalypse, should have failed, and varied so much in their opinions. *Now*, we only see and know

in part, therefore we must be contented to prophecy, (or define prophecy,) in part, until the lamp of time and experience shall shine upon those passages which are still dark and mysterious.

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.”* *Heaven*, here must mean, what is called in the New Testament, the *kingdom of heaven*, viz: the Mosaic, as well as the gospel dispensation, but particularly the former. Heaven is a place of light, and the residence of the great King. Christ says to the Jews, “The *kingdom of God* shall be taken from you.”† And again, as God hath said, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”‡ Almighty God made the moon and the stars, and set them in the firmament of the *heaven*, to give light upon the earth. All the light with which this world was blessed before the incarnation of Jesus Christ, shone through the Jewish nation—yet that dispensation can only be compared to the moon light. The land of Judea, may therefore be called *heaven*. “A wonder appeared,” &c. The church is compared to a woman.”§ “clothed with the Sun”—*The Lord Jesus Christ*, who is the Sun of Righteousness—the light and glory of the

* Rev. xii. 1.

† 2 Cor. vi. 16.

‡ Matth. xxi. 41.

§ Rev. xix.-7. xxi. 9.

church—" *The moon under her feet*"—the Jewish economy, which can only be considered as moon light, is now to be put down. When the Sun appears, it naturally obscures the moon. " *Upon her head a crown of twelve stars*" beautifully descriptive of the twelve apostles. The circumstances of our Saviour's birth, were painful in the extreme; not only was he born in poverty, but in exclusion from the common dwelling and comforts of man. She was delivered of a child, which was to rule all nations with a rod of iron—Christ's sceptre must, and will be swayed over the whole human family—If the nations will not hearken to the mild voice of mercy, they will be broken to pieces by the rod of his power. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth, for thy possession." And in reference to this glorious event, and previous to its accomplishment, the Almighty makes this awful declaration. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."* "He was caught up to the throne of God," where he ever liveth to intercede for us. "And behold a great red dragon" stood before the woman to devour the child as soon as it was born. The *dragon* represents the heathen or pagan nations.—The term may be applied to *all*, or *part of them*, or to an *individual*. The Jewish na-

* Ps. ii. 8, 9.

tion is frequently represented by the term *Jacob, Israel, Joseph, &c.*

Herod (*called the great*) was the son of Antipater, an Idumean; he derived his authority from the Roman emperor Augustus—which fully marks him with the name of dragon—his sanguinary character fully deserves the appellation of *red*. He caused his wife Mariamne, and several of his sons to be murdered. He opened wide his blood stained jaws to devour the holy child Jesus, when he had all the children in Bethlehem, and the coasts thereof murdered; and it is said one of his own little sons was included—That the Jews might not rejoice at his death, he convened all the great men of Judca, and shut them up in the circus of Jericho; and with tears in his eyes, while the pains of death were upon him, he extorted a promise from his sister Salome, and her husband Alexas, to have them put to death the moment he should expire!* Surely this was *red enough*.

The seven heads, may refer to the seven forms of government, through which Rome, *pagan*, passed; *i. e.* 1. The Regal power—2. The Dictatorship—3. The Power of the Prætors—4. The Consulate—5. The Triumvirate—6. The Imperial power—7. The Patriciate.

As there has been such a diversity of sentiment among the learned respecting the heads and horns of the Dragon and the Beast, we

* Ant. xvii.—vi

will advance no new absurdities; but simply suggest a plain rational idea, *i. e.* that they have a spiritual as well as a literal meaning.

The spiritual heads and horns of the Beast many refer to the principles and passions of our fallen nature, imbibed from the great Dragon, the furious Beast,—*i. e.* the Devil.

The heads may be thus designated—1. *Pride*—2. *Infidelity*, or *unbelief*—3. *Idolatry*—4. *Superstition*—5. *Dissimulation*—6. *Ambition*—7. *Lust*. The horns may refer to—1. *Cruelty*—2. *Anger*—3. *Malice*—4. *Hatred*—5. *Envy*—6. *Bigotry*—7. *Strife*—8. *Contention*—9. *Sedition*—10. *Love of applause*.

Through the instrumentality and opposition of those dreadful heads and horns, *nations, churches, communities, families, and individuals* have been mangled and torn to pieces in almost every age of the world, and in every country on earth.

This frightful monster—this Beast with such an assemblage of heads and horns, should interest and alarm us more than all the Emperors, Kings and Potentates, who have ever lived on earth, or who will ever infest church or state with their power and influence.

“*His tail drew a third part of the stars of heaven,*” &c. This is highly figurative language, and clothed in too much mystery to be understood by mortals *yet*. As the body, or great mass of the *heathen*, are in Asia; the Roman Empire, by which the Jewish nation

were conquered and partially destroyed, may be considered the tail, being small in point of numbers. In their war with the Jews, it is probable that not less than one-third part of that nation perished. This, however, is only conjecture—the whole scene may yet be in reversion; the future movements of the dragon, will no doubt be conspicuous and important.

“*The woman fled into the wilderness.*”—The term *woman*, applies to the church, as well as to the Jewish nation. The Israelites have literally fled into the wilderness, viz: an unsettled, barren, dreary place; in this condition they have been fed by the hand of God, and miraculously preserved for many centuries. But the Bride, the Lamb’s wife—the *christian church*, clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, &c. has also fled into the wilderness. How dreary has been her aspect for many centuries; scarcely any of her native loveliness of feature, is now to be seen, which she exhibited, when it was said—“And great grace was upon them all; neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the Apostles feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”*

When the fruit, which the primitive chris-

* Acts iv. 33, 34, 35.

tians bore, is examined, and compared with the withered, barren productions, in this highly favoured day, as well as for many centuries past, the church must be viewed as yet in the wilderness.

But from the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, there is good reason to believe, that she will soon come forth from her dreary seclusion, clothed in beauty and splendour, leaning on the arm of her Redeemer, the holy one of Israel.

“ *There was war in heaven,*” viz: in the *kingdom of heaven*. In the former and the present dispensation, this has literally been the case; the dragon, or the devil, in the character of his heathen children, made war against the Jewish kingdom, and also against the christians. In each dispensation or kingdom there has been war, and commotions, and blood.

The unclean spirit, noisy, restless, croaking, like frogs, flowed out upon the world to destroy its repose and harmony, through another channel, viz: the *beast*. This appellation may be given to the wicked—the unregenerate part of christendom, but particularly to the secular powers of Europe; their condition was materially changed when the light of the gospel shone among them; and when the gospel of Jesus Christ, was adopted as the religion of their country, their character and name must also be changed. They were no longer compelled to move in a stagnant pool, but were offered the waters of life. —

They were not now necessarily associated with owls and beasts of night, but the innocent dove, bearing the olive branch of peace, dwelt in their land. The mantle of night had in part fallen off, and they could see the path of life disclosed to view through the gospel. They were now favoured above the heathens; they moved and breathed in a purer element. But they were still the children of their father, the devil; and as he is called the beast, they may bear that name without violating any rule of reason or righteousness.

John says, "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the midst of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his head the name of blasphemy."*

He arose out of the sea, viz. out of multitudes of people, "*Having seven heads and ten horns.*"—This has already been noticed; it is probable, however, that no man can *now* satisfactorily define, or understand the meaning of those heads and horns—time will make them as plain as a sun beam.† *He was like*

* Chap. xiii.

† We have supposed it possible the heads and horns of the dragon and beast might refer, spiritually, to the principles and passions of our fallen nature. We are informed that one of the heads was wounded to death; and the deadly wound was afterwards healed. This head may be *infidelity* or *unbelief*—which has, within a few years past, been wounded, as it were, to death, by the sword of the spirit—by the light of the gospel: this head is not now lifted up, except in dark corners of our cities, or country. But from appearances, it is very possible that this prominent head will revive again

a leopard; how spotted and varied the character and complexion of those nations and kingdoms which compose the seat of the beast, or Europe. *His feet were as the feet of a bear.* They can traverse mountains, and valleys, and the roughest forest to accomplish their purpose, and to devour their prey. *His mouth was as the mouth of a lion.* When the warring nations of Europe speak, they roar as a lion, and cause the timid to tremble. *The dragon gave him his power*; gave him his existence. The Roman, Pagan, or heathen population, became a christian community, so that he derived his existence, consequently his *power*, from the *dragon*. The beast is now making a desperate and an alarming struggle; the unclean spirit is pouring out of his mouth, and will, in all probability, darken and poison all Europe, if not the whole world.

“*And all the world wondered after the beast.*” In the seat of the beast in Europe, the arts and sciences have wonderfully flourished; which, together with their political power and greatness, have caused all the world to wonder, admire, and as far as practicable, to imitate their example. “*And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.*” Commentators have differed widely respecting the commencement and termination of this time; nor is it proba-

that the wound will be healed, and it will become, *for a time*, more arrogant and powerful than it has ever yet been.

ble it will be correctly understood, until time throws more light on the subject. No doubt but prophetic time is meant, viz: twelve hundred and sixty years. It may, and doubtless does also literally mean, three years and a half, applied under different circumstances, and periods; which will be noticed hereafter.

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him.” How many persons, or civilized nations, now on earth, have not more or less, adopted the maxims, or customs, or fashions of Europe? All who have, virtually worship the beast.

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb.” This beast may be considered the unregenerate part, the secular or political power of these United States. He rose up out of the earth, where there were few, or no inhabitants. He had two horns like a lamb.

Our character, when compared with that of Europe, has been lamb like—quiet and inoffensive. Whether the two horns, refer to the royal form of government under Great Britain, and the present republican form, or not, is uncertain; if not, there will be a division of the union, or a change in the form of government.

“And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast.”

This country is rapidly advancing in power and greatness as a nation, as also in vice and wickedness. All the maxims, and customs, and fashions of Europe, are immediately brought to our shores, and eagerly adopted.

“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in sight of men.”

Has not this been literally verified? Did not Franklin draw down the electric fire from the clouds, in sight of the wondering world? The rapid improvements in the arts, particularly in the management of steam, may be considered miraculous.

Had any one related the history of this improvement as it is now seen in our country, to our fathers fifty years ago, it would have appeared as ridiculous and absurd to them, as our divine Master's miracles appear to our modern infidels.

“And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.”

As the devil is, correctly speaking, *the beast*, and his children inherit his name and possessions; so must they bear *his mark*, *openly* or *clandestinely*, in their hands, or in their foreheads; this mark is *sin*. How many *even now*, can be found entirely free from this disgraceful mark? Some will even glory in their shame, and openly declare we cannot be delivered from it. It is however a source

of great consolation, to know that however powerful this beast may be, he is not *omnipotent*. But we have great reason to fear that his influence and mark extend far and wide throughout the earth. Instance *pride*, a black mark of the beast; how many are free from its polluting touch? Those individuals who are happily delivered from this stain, will be ashamed of nothing but sin. How many do we find in the circle of our acquaintance, who would appear in the presence of the rich and gay dressed part of society, clothed in the coarsest apparel, say oznaburgs, linsey, &c. provided it was clean, and feel no shame, or mortification? Now shame and uneasiness, are marks of the beast, and mark the souls, where they exist, as still in a diseased and mangled state. How many are there, who would indulge in no *irritation* or *resentment*, if their characters were traduced, and they were insulted, and injured, wrongfully, in the grossest manner?

Irritation, and *resentment*, came with the beast out of the bottomless pit, and constitute his black mark. In a word, any violation of the law of God, however slight it may be, must be considered as a mark of the beast—it is *sin*. Let us carefully examine Christ's *law*. Sin is the transgression of the law, and every departure from Christ's commandments must constitute a *mark* of the beast.

To meet this comprehensive, and important command of Christ, viz: "Thou shalt love

thy neighbour as thyself;" it becomes necessary, that in every transaction with our neighbour, we must regard sacredly his convenience and his interest, as *much as our own*. Nothing can be more plain to the eye of reason, than that we must act upon this principle at all times, if we expect to meet the spirit of our Master's law—God is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Again, to meet this important and honourable demand, no man can sell to his neighbour any article which will not benefit him. Who among us, engaged in merchandize, will not sell to his neighbour spirituous liquor only as a medicine—tobacco—snuff—ribands—lace—jewelry—costly apparel—paintings, or any article calculated to please the fancy only? All who do, can have no sincere desire to promote their neighbour's interest; their motives must be selfish; which proves there is a want of pure and undefiled *love*, consequently it forms a mark of the beast, a violation of Christ's *law*. How many in the trading world, will neither give, or receive credit? Those who do, violate the plain gospel precept, "Owe no man any thing."

Many will exclaim, "*Extravagance! Enthusiasm!* Such will never be the state of society on earth." Do not mistake; as sure as Christ died to save us from *sin*, which is the *mark of the beast*, so sure will the time arrive, when it will all be blotted out, and the

mark will be sought for in vain, either in the forehead or in the hand.

In the momentous business of salvation we cannot be too careful. The light of eternity will probably discover marks which are now concealed from our own eyes. Hence Christ says, "many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophecied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity."* Here is evidence from the highest authority, to prove that many will carry their delusions to the bar of God.

My respectable reader will pardon me, if I relate an incident, which occurred some time since, illustrative of this hypothesis—it made a deep impression on my mind; may it have a more beneficial effect on all who may read it. Being unwell, at a kind friend's house, where every thing was neat and clean—the floor of my chamber was unusually white; the servant brought in a small mug, containing a preparation for me to take as I retired to bed.—It was set on the hearth—a chunk fell and upset it—part of the contents ran on the floor; I removed it as soon as possible, but felt not a little mortified at the careless occurrence. At four o'clock when I arose and lighted the candle, the floor attracted my first attention; and to my great

* Matth. vii. 22, 23.

surprise and gratification, there was no stain to be seen; it was dry and white. With the light of the candle, I could see to read distinctly, very small print. When the sun arose, and shone into the room, a *plain stain* was quite perceptible on the floor. The following reflections were forcibly presented to my mind. With the light I now use, all appears to be well—no stain is perceptible; but when the light of eternity shines forth upon my soul, will there be no stains, or dark marks to be seen? Do I now honestly bring the light of God's holy word and spirit to bear on my heart and conscience? Is there nothing which that divine standard enjoins which I omit—nothing which it forbids that I indulge in? When I am reproved by a friend for any improper conduct, do I really feel thankful for the admonition, and turn from the evil. To be perfectly free from the mark of the beast, is a great and glorious privilege, and indispensable to our salvation.

“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six.”

This is very mysterious, nor is it probable that it will be understood by mortals until time throws more light upon the scenery, and the important events which are now passing in review before our eyes.

Writers, and expositors of various descriptions, have so multiplied interpretations, as

to leave the inquiring mind more dark and unsettled, than it would have been without their learned comments. The number 666, has been discovered by them to apply definitely to nearly twenty different personages, besides empires and kingdoms. The word of truth declares, *that "the world by wisdom knew not God."* The wheel of time will soon display the wisdom and knowledge of God, and disclose the number and name of the beast satisfactorily, to the comprehension of even the way-faring man. It is worthy of remark, however, that the number ascribed to the beast, viz: 666 added to Daniel's 1335.* And those two numbers added to the time before our Saviour's birth, complete the term of 6000 years; when it is presumable the reign of Christ in its full glory will commence on earth.

Peter says—"Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

John says—"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand; and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the

* Dan. xii. 12.

nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.”*

From this, and other parts of God’s word, we may confidently expect, that there will be a thousand years enjoyed on earth as a holy Sabbath, when the mark of the beast, or the number of his name, will not be found among men; either in their foreheads, or in their hands. The first, and the second beast, and the dragon, are all one and the same, existing under different circumstances; and will finally be taken, together with their father, the devil, and the false prophet, and cast alive into the lake of fire, burning with brimstone.†

Another channel through which this gall of iniquity, will be poured out to disturb the peace and harmony of men is through the *false prophet*. To whom will this character apply? Prophets, in all ages, have been connected with the people and church of God. That which is applicable to an individual member, may be applied to the whole church. It may therefore be rationally inferred that the corrupt church, is styled the *false prophet*. Protestant writers have generally, and freely given the name and character of *false prophet*, to the church of Rome, or to Mahomed. But Christ is not divided—he never had but one church on earth—and never will have more than one

What character does the church sustain?

*Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3.

† Rev xix. 20.

Does she teach the good and right way to heaven only? Are not declarations made, and sentiments held and propagated by the different members and branches of the church, diametrically opposite one to the other?—Plain contradictions cannot be reconciled—opposites cannot meet together. It necessarily follows that some of the branches of the church must be wrong; consequently what they teach is *false*. Who among us are hardy enough to say, all others are wrong, and we alone are right? Therefore out of our own mouth, and by our own acknowledgement, the character of *false prophet* is confirmed to the church, in its corrupt state.

Hear what the Lord says of the Jews, a people whom we have already proved to be more united in their sentiments and affections than we are, and as moral in their conduct. “A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophecy *falsely*, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will you do in the end thereof? For from the least of them, even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one *dealeth falsely*. They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, *peace, peace*; when there is no *peace*.”

Were they not ashamed, when they had committed abominations? Nay, they were

not at all ashamed, neither could they blush, therefore they shall fall among them that fall; at the time that I visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.”*

These solemn declarations, and awful denunciations, were disregarded by that infatuated people—their eyes were blinded by prejudice—all others might be, and were in their estimation wrong—but they must be right.

What kind of a spirit is now to be discovered proceeding out of the mouth of the *false prophet—the corrupt church*? Is it not like *frogs, unclean, and croaking* in every direction? Each party contending violently for their own doctrine and precepts, while the *unclean spirit* of division and discord, is perceptible in almost every different branch of the church! O how little of that pure, sweet spirit of our divine Master is to be seen, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when his disciples informed him they had forbidden one to cast out devils in his name, because he followed not them—hear his reply, “*forbid him not; for he that is not against us, is for us.*”

As our privileges have been so wonderfully extended within a few years past; and it is reasonable to expect, that the devil’s chain has been proportionably lengthened, all may expect soon to feel that awful denunciation—“*woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of*

* Jer. v. 30, 31; and vi. 13, 14, 15.

the sea, for the devil is come down, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." He is now going forth in his dark, unclean spirit, out of the mouth of the *beast*, and of the *false prophet*, and no doubt but the heathen world will soon be influenced by the same unholy spirit of discord.

A spirit of liberty and discord mightily prevails in Europe, forming an irresistible current, which will no doubt be met by an opposite tide, flowing from the despotic thrones; when these two torrents meet, they may be expected to produce a stream of burning lava, which will deluge all Europe, if not the whole world with blood.

Whether the present agitated state of Europe will be the commencement of those momentous events—the beginning of sorrows to the church, and the world; or whether the important period is yet further off, time alone must determine. The times are truly ominous. But should the present cloud blow over without producing the storm; yet will the time soon arrive, when the cloud will gather darkness, and burst with awful vengeance on a guilty world. The clergy in England are beginning to tremble, and are wisely consulting the God of heaven for safety. They recommend fasting and prayer—this is good—*excellent*; but *their hands* must be cleansed from defilement, before God can hear and answer their prayers, and heal their land. The mark of the beast must be erased

from their hands as well as their foreheads. The time will soon come, when judgement will begin at the house of God. We must, as did the Jews, who put away their heathen wives—we must cut off every idol; we must descend into the real valley of humility.—Our sacrifices, and a great display of liberality, while there is *blood* on our own skirts and hands, will not do; we must return to the simplicity and purity of primitive christianity, before God's anger will be turned away.

“And there came one of the seven angels, which had seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, come hither; I will show thee the judgement of the *great whore that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.* So he carried me in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured *beast*, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication; and upon her head was a name written, *Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth.* And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs

of Jesus; and when I saw, I wondered with great admiration.”*

As Jerusalem represents the pure Church of Christ, and is said to be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband,†—so Babylon is an emblem of, and an appellation given to the corrupt church. Protestant expositors have generally applied this term Babylon to the papal or Roman Catholic Church; but if we bear the mark which constitutes the character, why should we not be included? Christ is not divided; and every branch of the church whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, or Dissenters, must be identified as one; the measure of their spiritual purity or defilement, will be determined by a just and holy God. The different branches should therefore feel a fraternal regard for each other.—But in this day of abounding light, it is not uncommon for one denomination to expose the foibles and blemishes of another, and that too with seeming delight. Among the respectable people of the world, it is esteemed disgraceful for one brother to expose and defame the character of another. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good—He says of his former people, the Jews—“As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sister, hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, and thy daughters.”‡ What a cutting reflection and reproof was this to the Jewish church; and if

* Rev. xvii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. † Rev. xxi. 2. ‡ Ez. xiv. 43.

we deserve it as richly as they did, will a just God condemn them and acquit us?

The most dismal picture is drawn of the corrupt church—she is termed, “*the great whore—the mother of harlots.*” The nations of the earth are said to have committed fornication with her. This will apply as correctly, though not as extensively to every branch, as to the Roman Catholic Church. The king is recognized as the head of the Protestant Church in England. Through his authority and influence she receives nearly all her temporal support; the church and state are intimately connected with each other; which constitutes the crime complained of, and marks definitely the character given to the woman.

But can this be said of Dissenters? Will it apply to the church, or if you please, churches in this happy land—in these United States—where civil and religious liberty abound?”

In addition to the unguarded and unholy connexions already noticed as existing in the different societies, other traits may be seen, which will identify all the offspring with their mother. An impartial glance into the Gospel glass, will enable us at once to determine the important fact.—Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the

Father, but is of the world, and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God, abideth forever.”* In this passage there is a definite line drawn, nor can we mistake its bearings, unless we close our eyes, and like the haughty Jews declare, we will not have this man (*in his way*) to reign over us. The world, and the Father, or Almighty God, are here fairly represented as *rivals*, contending for the human heart; *we cannot love both*, any more than we can serve God and mammon. In this mirror, the features of our countenance may be correctly and minutely traced.—“*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh,*” including all the objects which are *pleasing* or *desirable* to our fallen nature, the *smiles* and *honours* of the world, as well as the grosser pleasures of *eating* and *drinking*, are all embraced in this clause. God will not make a compromise with his rival, nor accept part of our affections. Hence it follows, that christians should not stoop, or consent to receive the commendations, or honours of poor dying mortals, though they should sway sceptres, or rule over millions. “How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another? Again, “Whether we eat or drink, we should do all to the glory of God.” *Our health alone*, and not the gratification of our appetites, should be the uniform object of *God’s* children in eating or drinking. *Ec-*

* 1 John ii. 15, 16, 17.

vain to plead for little indulgencies; unless the honourable man would be pleased to see his bosom companion embrace another person, and say to him—" *it is a small thing*—no one but a man of a contracted mind, would limit the pleasure and enjoyment of his wife."—

When the wife no longer finds supreme delight in the affections of her husband alone, but considers it an abridgement of her liberty and happiness, to be bound to her companion by the most rigid laws of virtue and honour; adieu forever to respectability and happiness.

Can God be less honourable than man; or the eyes of Jehovah less penetrating than the eyes of flesh? Not so; God is not mocked; whatsoever we sow, that shall we also reap.

Hence every act exclusively to gratify the appetites or passions of our fallen corrupt nature, is an act of *spiritual adultery*. Hear the language of inspiration, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God? Whosoever therefore will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God."*

Again, "The desire of the eyes." How fatal this snare; and how many thousands run into it, and are led captive by the devil at his will. How many houses do we see in the possession of those christians who are considered independent people, where there is nothing exhibited exclusively to please the wife? How many persons do we know, among the

* James iv. 4.

those who are called respectable citizens, who have nothing useless, or unnecessary, or designed exclusively to please the eye, about their apparel? Every such mark about our houses, or our persons, in a greater or less degree, constitutes an act of spiritual adultery.

Taking this scriptural and rational view of the subject, it will at once be seen, how far all the different branches of the church, are involved in those black and dishonourable crimes charged against the corrupt church, significantly called the *whore of Babylon*. Nations and kings are said to have committed fornication with her; she partook of their pleasures, and received their smiles and honours; and in turn permitted them to enter the sanctuary of the Lord, which should never have been defiled by the footsteps of the wicked. She has borrowed their costume, and learned their language; thus, those two characters, the world and the church, are intimately connected together, and reciprocally smile on each other; which establishes the crime on all our reformed churches, and confirms the character to them, which they have generally given, unequivocally, to the corrupt Church of Rome.

The eleventh chapter, though clothed with mysterious figures, and signs difficult to be understood, appears to point with perspicuity to the events we anticipate—to a day of sore calamities, and a time immediately suc-

ceeding it, of indescribable glory to the church.

“ And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in like manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.”*

By the two *witnesses*, we may rationally understand the *Jewish* and *Christian* churches; that which is applicable to an individual member, may be applied to the whole nation or church. They stand as *living* witnesses of the truth of Revelation.

Perhaps there is not a more conclusive evidence, or *witness*, to prove the truth of God's word, than the history of the Jews presents to every candid mind. They have prophesied, and still continue to prophecy, or rather to confirm the prophecies, for in them is, and will be fulfilled, all the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments. To be clothed in sackcloth, implies a state of degradation and sorrow. In this condition the

* Rev. xi. 3, 4, 5, 6.

Jewish church, or people, have been literally placed for many centuries; nor is it much less applicable to the christian church. When we consider the great and unspeakable privileges placed within her reach—the great glory which should mark the Redeemer's kingdom under the shining rays of the gospel—what God's word declares it *should, and will be*, and contrast the picture with what the church is now, and has been for many centuries; we are constrained to say, *this witness is also clothed in sackcloth.*

They are called the *two olive trees*, from whence is extracted the oil so famous for mollifying and healing wounds; and particularly for expelling poison. Through the medium of those trees, or witnesses, the grace of God, which heals, and soothes, and comforts, under all circumstances, has been communicated to a diseased, poisoned, world. They are called the *two candlesticks*. All the light, which has cheered this gloomy world, has shone through those two witnesses. Candlesticks do not originate, or diffuse, but are designed to hold the light; the light of God's word is particularly held by them, while they stand before God, reflecting the rays of his word upon the dark minds of men. *The Jews hold the Old—the Christians, the Old and New Testaments. "If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devour-eth their enemies."*

Notwithstanding all the persecution and

difficulties which they have experienced in past ages, they have both survived, to the astonishment of all their enemies—and ultimately, all the malice of their foes will fall, with increased violence, on the heads of those who wish to hurt or destroy them. God is a *consuming fire*, and will speedily consume their adversaries, though he bear long with them. There is a striking instance where this was literally verified in the case of one of those witnesses. The fire of God, at the command of his servant Elijah, fell from heaven, and consumed his enemies.*

They have power to shut up heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power to turn water to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.

It is not said they will exercise that power—yet, in some instances, it has been done. “Elias was a man of like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.”†—Again: “And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharoah, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.”‡ Nor is it reasonable to suppose that the power of the

* 2 Kings, i. 10.

† James v. 17.

‡ Exodus vii. 20.

christian witness shall be less than that which was given to the Jews—the words of our divine Master on this subject are very express. “And Jesus answering saith unto them, have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith ”* If therefore the christians exert not the power which has been imparted unto them, it must be their own fault.

Those *witnesses* are to prophecy a thousand two hundred and three score days clothed in sackcloth—prophetic days, viz: 1260 years. Many learned and pious divines and expositors of God’s word, have entertained and expressed different opinions with regard to the termination of this gloomy period, and the commencement of a more glorious day, but for wise purposes, it has been sealed up, and concealed from eyes of flesh.

It is generally believed that the time revealed to Daniel, refers to the same events, and the period spoken of in the Apocalypse; he is commanded to set a seal on the particular time until it shall be fulfilled.

“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end. And he said, go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed to the time of

* Mark xi. 22, 23.

the end.”* The disciples asked our Lord when he intended to restore the kingdom of Israel; his reply was, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”†

Our divine Master not only informs his disciples that the *time is concealed*; but the *witnesses* are also clearly identified by him, “*And ye shall be witnesses.*” This could not refer exclusively to the Apostles, but to their successors also; they did not reach the uttermost parts of the earth; nor could that expression refer exclusively to the land of Judea, which sometimes means the world, in scripture, as that had been separately specified. Therefore it is imprudent, and fruitless to attempt a developement of what God has concealed. Nor should we be anxiously and curiously concerned to know the particular times or seasons, any more than to ascertain the day of our dissolution. It must be left where God has placed it—in concealment. We know it will come—we know it is at hand.

“And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the

* Dan. xii. 4, and 9.

† Acts i. 7, 8.

bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them."

When all the prophecies concerning them, shall be filled up and finished; the beast, the devil, shall make war *against them and overcome them*. His spirit will be diffused largely into his children. Then will commence that awful conflict between light and darkness. The beast, or the devil, is said to ascend out of the bottomless pit. Then will be felt that awful woe denounced against the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea. Then will the spirit of the wicked one—that unclean spirit, resembling frogs, mightily prevail, and darken the whole earth, which will give rise to the grand, but awful and decisive controversy, or struggle for Zion;—the powers of the world, influenced by the spirit of the beast, against the two witnesses, to sweep them and the religion of Jesus Christ from the earth; and for a time the beast, or opposing power of the wicked, will be victorious.

The church, we have already proved, is not in a state to resist vigorously and successfully; being mixed with her enemies, her hands are enfeebled, and she will be overcome.

"*They were killed*"—conquered—put down; afraid to assert their rights, or their sentiments—completely under the power and control of their enemies. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the streets of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and

Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." In neither of those places, Sodom or Egypt, was our Lord crucified literally, but mystically—the great city—christendom. They are not allowed by their implacable foes to put their dead bodies in graves. They are to be left in an open, and exposed state.—Though cast down—conquered and degraded, they shall not have the honour of concealment; but the eye of contempt, and the finger of scorn shall meet them publicly and privately. Gloomy—melancholy—miserable reverse!

"And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves." Three prophetic days and an half—three years and six months; corresponding with the furious beast spoken of in the 13th Chapter. "And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months."

When a sentence, or declaration, will bear two or more legitimate constructions, either may be applied with equal propriety. It may therefore safely be inferred, that the time of deep distress, of great calamities, and death like state of the church, will continue *three years and an half*.

"And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because those two prophets tormented them that dwell on the

earth.”* There is even at this time, notwithstanding the popular current which is bearing religion along, a bitter spirit of hostility existing in the minds of the great ones of the earth against it, and its author, which would be more pointed, and apparent, if we were more like our Master and his immediate followers. Among our own rulers, there exists a high handed spirit of infidelity. Instance only the contempt manifested by our general government, for *the Sabbath day*. In their proceedings on the subject of transporting the mail on the Lord’s day, the commencement of a distant conflict, between the parties, may be seen. The course recently pursued against the poor Indians may form another point of collision. It is not, however, our business, or intention to point out how, or when, those great events will be brought about.

The watchmen should faithfully point to the impending storm.—The people should imitate the wise conduct of the Ninevites—set down in penitential sorrow at their divine Master’s feet; and fast and pray, that God in his infinite mercy and goodness would avert the blow.

Since the first edition of this little work was published, our political horizon has been obscured with clouds of dark and threatening aspect. Our free and happy country came

* Rev. v. 10.

within one step of being plunged into a civil war.

The imaginations of men can form no idea of the horrors of such a state. It would be better for our country to be engaged in war with the combined powers of Europe, than to be thrown into an internal commotion, or a civil conflict. Those signs are truly alarming. That dreadful event is now nigher to us than it was a few years ago.—Now, it is thought of, and spoken of freely in almost all circles. Some years since, it would have been considered as a mark of presumption and insanity to have intimated that such an event was even possible.

“*Those prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth,*” by their denunciations against sin, and declaring aloud to the unregenerate the awful consequences of living and dying in a state of rebellion against God. By proclaiming faithfully to open sinners, great and small, the awful judgements of the Lord, which are lowering over their heads. By declaring, in the language of divine truth, that upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup. Their consciences were *tormented*, and they became exasperated to a degree of phrenzy.

There is however another way by which the *two witnesses* may torment them that dwell on the earth—by a continual applica-

tion to them for their *money*, by public collections, and by private contributions.

I am conscious that here I tread upon delicate ground; but I tread firmly, and honourably in the fear of that God whose I am, and who has honoured me with a commission to preach the everlasting gospel of truth, and woe unto me if I am unfaithful.

The judicious christian, after a candid investigation of the subject, must see the propriety of keeping within the pale of the church, in collecting all our pecuniary resources. Our enemies, the wicked, have already made a considerable handle of this circumstance; but the increasing and abounding popularity of the church, has thus far borne down all their clamours. By this unguarded and indelicate course, we do place ourselves in the power of our enemies. All God's children are—they must be honourable people; nothing could be more painful, and mortifying to a high minded sinner, than to be compelled to ask a favour of his enemy; surely our sense of honour is not more obtuse, than that of those who are regarded by the Lord Jesus as children of the devil!—Every unregenerate man on earth is an *enemy* to God, and must necessarily be to his people. Many, both in and out of the church, may, and will, no doubt, object to this assertion; but God's word must stand even if all men should be found liars. The word of

* John viii. 44.

God declares unequivocally, *that the carnal mind is enmity against God—it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.*

We may widen the way, and make it pleasant to their feet, but between Christ and belial, there can be no concord. The law of Christ, spiritually and faithfully enforced, will ever be offensive to all classes of sinners. When our popularity begins to wane, they will complain of our friendship, particularly when we declare faithfully to them that they must be turned into hell; and then ask them for pecuniary assistance. They will rejoice to get clear of their tormenting neighbours. Reason and honour declare aloud, that the church should keep within her own borders, in collecting money for any religious purpose. Our nakedness is by this course completely exposed. I was sometime since eye witness to a mortifying scene, which is a case in point, and strengthens my fears, and my supposition.

A Minister of the gospel, at a three days meeting, observed one or two advertisements on the side of the church; he immediately removed them from that place—very soon he was called on by an enraged sinner to know if he had taken down his advertisement; the preacher replied mildly in the affirmative.—The insulted child of belial, peremptorily demanded them of him; he had thrown them away, but they were picked up and given to the rightful owner; he then in a boisterous,

profane manner, declared that he had paid his money towards building that house; consequently he had as much right to it as any other man; and in an open, daring, insulting manner, hammered his papers up to the house again, in presence of a large concourse of people, and triumphantly dared any man to touch them again. The poor insulted servant of God was compelled to see his Father's house, the Lord's sanctuary, degraded to the level of a common tavern, or sign post, or fight the devil on his own ground."

We are well able to go up and possess the land under the banner of Jesus Christ, associated with, and depending on, the aid of his armies alone. If our enemies, or the wicked, offer us their money, we may then accept or refuse it; but to solicit them for their aid, is too degrading, and mortifying for serious reflection.

The Philistians were afraid to confide in David's integrity when he offered his services to fight their battles against his own bretheren; they would not suffer him to join in battle, or to assist them, although one of their own kings solicited them to do so; they well knew that an enemy was not to be relied on in the hour of peril.*

Their joy at the overthrow of their tormenting neighbours, is expressed by sending gifts one to another, and making merry.† But their songs of triumph will be of short

* 1 Saml. xxix. 3, 4, 5.

† Ver. 10.

duration. The horse and his rider will be suddenly overthrown to rise no more. After three years and a half, their eyes will see a new sight—their ears will hear a new sound. They will all be confounded together, and forever put to shame.

*“After three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them, which saw them.”** Behold now this great sight. The spirit of life, from God entered into them.

The spirit which raised up Jesus Christ from the grave; the power and glory of God will again be displayed as it was on that more important occasion—when the third day had passed away, “Behold there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightening, and his raiment as white as snow; and for fear of him, the keepers did quake, and became as dead men.” Vain impotent man, didst thou think by thy soldiers and thy swords, to keep the Lord of life and glory in the grave? What consummate folly! Neither will all the armed and enraged sons of belial on earth, with their weapons of cruelty and death, be able to keep those two witnesses in their graves—their degraded and overthrown state. The same

Jesus who rose triumphantly, and led the monster death in chains, will interpose in behalf of his poor despised slain followers—his overthrown church. Who then will be able to stand against his might, or to oppose his power? He will raise them triumphantly by his omnipotent power; and they shall stand on their feet, and their enemies shall behold them; while fear and dismay shall fall in clouds of vengeance on their malignant destroyers. They will then assume an *upright position*, prepared for marching, or holy activity in the divine life.

God's *witnesses*—his *purified church*—his *holy people*, will now no longer be clothed in sackcloth, or wear a mixed garment, or allow their children to speak two languages; nor will their fine gold be any more mixed with the alloy of this world. “And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.* Heaven is an exalted place—a place of joy and happiness—it is the residence of the great King. God will dwell among his people. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them.

Then shall the glorious reign of Christ on earth commence. Jews and Gentiles shall be consolidated into one peaceful, harmonious band of brethren. Then shall there be but one fold and one shepherd. The lion and

* Ver. 12.

the lamb shall lie down together, and nothing shall hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain of the Lord. Our prejudices, and our animosities, and contentions, and strife, will then be buried in the grave of eternal oblivion. Every stain of sin, every mark of the beast, shall then be washed away in the blood of the Lamb, and the white banner of *love—unsullied love*, shall wave triumphantly over the armies of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their motto will be, “*Holiness unto the Lord.*”—Their song will be, “unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and the Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. AMEN.”

“Jesus shall reign, where e’er the sun,
Doth his successive journeys run;
From north to south the princes meet,
To pay their homage at his feet.”

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there was great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world, are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign, forever and ever.”* Amen; so come Lord Jesus, and come quickly.

We should not flatter ourselves that all is well, as did the infatuated Jews, when their enemies were encamped around the walls of their beloved Jerusalem, and a glittering sword, of awful import, is said to have been suspended over their devoted heads; yet

* Rev. xi. 15.

those alarming omens of destruction were idly construed into favourable indications. To the last they were unwilling to believe that evil could befall God's city—the people of the Lord, and the holy land. Almighty God had made them great and precious promises, which they did not, or would not understand correctly. He had said to them—“For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”

They examined only the fair side of the picture. They gladly received and plead the promises, but forgot the conditions upon which they were predicated. Though God had promised that he would not forsake them, yet they found to their cost, that *they* could depart from him. They have suffered for the last seventeen or eighteen centuries, unspeakable calamities. We are not more willing to believe evil of ourselves, than were those blind and unfortunate people. Many of us now believe, and publicly declare, that God will never forsake his people. What an unchangeable God has done, he may do again. We all know that he has forsaken, and cast off the Jews. They were as dear to him at one time, as we can now be. He speaks of them in the most affectionate manner.—“Thus said the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of

thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown; *Israel was holiness unto the Lord*, and the first fruit of his increase; all that devour him, evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord.”*

From God’s own words they were highly pleasing in his sight; he even recognizes them as his *bride*.—“*The love of thine espousals.*” They had as plain and unequivocal promises of God’s everlasting love continuing towards them, as we have; yet the same prophet speaks by the authority and command of Almighty God, of this same people, in the most alarming language—“*Be astonished, O ye heavens*, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord, for my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have hewed out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”† Should we not learn a lesson of wisdom from their folly, and their sufferings?

An astonishing flood of prosperity has been flowing in upon the church, for the last forty or fifty years, which still seems to widen and extend rapidly in its influence and effects; for which our hearts should glow with humble gratitude and fervent love to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift. But, alas! for poor fallen, erring man; he is

* Jer. ii. 2, 3.

† Jer. ii. 12, 13.

ever prone to turn the blessings of God, into curses. Neither nations, nor churches, nor individuals, have hitherto borne prosperity with becoming humility and gratitude. The Lord complains loudly of his people Israel, to whom he had extended abundant mercies and privileges.—“But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked; thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art increased with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the God of his salvation.” The experience and the conduct of others should be received by us as an instructive lesson.

God’s great promises were made indiscriminately to all the Israelites who left Egypt; yet only two out of more than six hundred thousand, to whom the promise was extended, reached the promised land.

When Christ came to his own, they received him not.—Few were found even in a state to receive the truth as it is in Jesus; by their pride and folly they were ruined.

Should we not therefore be alarmed at our condition, rather than flatter ourselves that all is well, and cry peace, peace, when destruction may be at the very door?

The language of inspiration addressed to the Hebrews, is salutary and applicable to us who are now called christians.—“Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us, of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”

The admonition of our divine Master, should not be neglected—no, not for one moment—“*Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning. Lest coming suddenly, he shall find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch.*”

In the preceding remarks, we have endeavoured to show that a great day, generally termed the millenium, is at hand—that the church is not now in a state to receive Christ at his second appearance—that, in all human probability, the church, and christian world will, previous to that glorious event, experience a more awful and complete overthrow, than did the Jews soon after our Saviour’s first appearance on earth.

Therefore, we will close our remarks on this subject, with the impressive admonition of our blessed Redeemer:—“Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”*

* Luke xxi. 34, 35, 36.

CONCLUSION.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE CHRISTIANS PRIVILEGES IN THIS LIFE.

MANY pious, excellent, christians, are grieved, from day to day, because of their inbred corruptions. They believe that if they are assailed by pride, or anger, or evil tempers of any kind, that these sinful passions must exist in their hearts. They wish to be like the kings' daughter, all glorious within; yet, notwithstanding all the efforts which they can make, and all the faith they can exercise, these swelling tumults will occasionally agitate their bosoms, and tinge with sinful sediment the sweet pelucid streams of peace and joy which should flow through their souls in uncontaminated rivulets. Their experience beclouds the rising sun of their faith and hope, with fears that their hearts will never be cleansed from all moral defilement, while they remain in this valley of tears and sorrow.

Others sincerely and honestly believe, that they cannot be perfect in this life—that they cannot be sanctified wholly—that they cannot live in the flesh without committing sin.

If all prejudice be laid aside, we think it

will be practicable perfectly to allay the fears of the former, and correct the errors of the latter.

There is not a rational, intelligent christian in the world who does not believe that a violation of the law of God is sin. There are, however, various opinions respecting the nature of God's law. Some positively affirm that ignorance violates the holy law, and constitutes sin: this we cannot believe; yet, in a qualified sense, it may be so. Ignorance is certainly a wide deviation from the perfections of deity, and that holy image in which man was created; it is, therefore, in its nature sinful; or rather it is the effect of sin. The same may be said of a defective memory, and of all our *innocent* infirmities; even these are sinful in their nature; yet they are innocent in their application, because we inherit them, as a necessary consequence, from our first parents, and Christ has made an ample atonement for them by his death and sufferings. Hence the apostle says—"For as in *Adam* all die, even so in *Christ* shall all be made alive."^{*} This declaration can only refer to *original sin*, otherwise even the rich man would not have lifted up his eyes in hell.

That degree of ignorance, however, which is the effect of our own negligence, involves us in both sin and guilt, and must, without pardon, end in condemnation and ruin.

^{*} 1 Cor. xv. 22.

All intelligent christians will readily agree, that the disordered passions of our fallen nature, called *pride, anger, malice, envy, &c.* are sinful in their nature and defile the soul; hence the prevailing opinion, that, because we feel an emotion of anger, there must be anger, consequently *sin* in our hearts; therefore, they cannot be pure—they cannot be cleansed from all moral defilement.

The holiest men on earth, will, in all probability, be exposed to the assaults of these evil passions while they remain in a probationary state: to be placed entirely above their reach in this life, would be an eminence above that on which our divine Master stood. Jesus Christ was spotless and undefiled, although he was “*in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*”^{*} He must necessarily have felt the approach of passion as we do, or this declaration respecting him would be incorrect; yet we do not for one moment imagine that any of these evil propensities or passions had any place in Christ’s heart, or *mingled* with the glorious and unsullied virtues which adorned his character.

It must, therefore, necessarily follow that the evils through which the temptations were presented to our Saviour’s mind, must have had an external existence; but where, or how they existed, who can tell?—certainly no finite being. Secret things belong to God.

It will follow, by a fair and rational parity

^{*} Heb. iv. 15.

of reasoning, that if those evils which so often disturb the peace of men, assailed our *divine Master as they do his followers*, and yet they had no place in his heart, they may, in like manner, assault the children of God, without having any existence in their hearts, or mingling more or less with their virtues. Evil in every shape and form, is intimately connected with the devil, and forms part of his character: wherever he exists, he exerts his fatal influence, through the instrumentality of his agents, among whom we may safely reckon *anger, pride, discontent, &c.* They continually hover around the heart of fallen man, urged on in their enmity and work of destruction every moment by the devil, who “goeth about, like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” Hence our excellent poet:—

“ Only have faith in God: in faith your foes assail:
Not wrestling against flesh and blood, but all the powers of
hell:
From thrones of glory driven, by flaming vengeance hurl'd,
They throng the air, and darken heaven, and rule the lower
world.”

Though unseen by mortal eyes, yet there exists around us continually two armies of good and evil spirits. They are in their nature irreconcilable—they cannot mingle together: however near they may approximate to each other—yet is there a line of demarkation as distinctly drawn between them as there is between *virtue* and *vice*; *good* and *evil*, or between *light* and *darkness*

The Holy Spirit of God (the only source whence any good can emanate) is ever striving to influence mortals on honourable and voluntary terms, to walk in the path of virtue and righteousness. This fact is confirmed by the word of God:—“*For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*” Again:—“*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.*”* On the other hand, we are admonished to “*be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.*”†

When Almighty God spoke the universe into existence, he established laws of consistency for the regulation and government of all the works of his hands; and said—“*let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind.*” There is no disorder or confusion in any of the works or ways of God. The same cause will invariably produce the same effect. A good tree will uniformly bear good fruit; and a corrupt tree will invariably produce corrupt fruit. The fig tree cannot bear olive berries, neither a vine figs; nor can any fountain yield both fresh and salt water. Therefore nothing *good* can emanate from an evil source.

God is the only source of good in heaven or on earth. Man originally bore his Maker's

* Rom. xiii. 14. Heb. i. 14.

† 1 Peter v. 8.

express image; consequently he was altogether good; but when he rebelled against his Creator, the whole scene was instantly reversed: from a lamp of light, beauty, and order, he became a broken vessel, distinguished only for its darkness, deformity, and confusion.

From a high and holy—a wise and honourable child of God, he became a degraded, polluted, ignorant, miserable child of the devil.

Agreeably to the divine law of order, after man's fall there could not be a mixture of good and evil connected with his character, but from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet there was no sound spot to be found. If a man steals *one cent*, that moment he becomes, (not partially, but entirely) a thief; his character does not present an anomaly, partly honest, and partly dishonest.

In reference to man's condition after the fall, God himself declares that "*the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*"* All was darkness without any light—wickedness extreme, without one particle of righteousness. Nor was this the case at times only; there were no intervals of reason, when the symptoms of virtue could be discovered. It was "*continually*"—uniformly bad. The source was vitiated, therefore the stream must be alto-

* Gen. vi. 5.

gether impure. Consequently, if there is *now* any good connected with man's heart, it must emanate immediately from God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; it cannot proceed from the devil, neither can it flow from our own fallen corrupt nature.

Experience will prove incontestably, that even the worst man on earth has something good attached to his character. He has at least *good desires*, and *good intentions*; these could not possibly emanate from any other source than the fountain of living waters, even from the living God through Jesus Christ our Lord; yet Christ does not dwell in the sinner's heart—the devil reigns there. Hence our Saviour says—"BEHOLD I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK; *if any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*"*

Observe, Christ is *WITHOUT*, but knocks at the door of the sinner's heart. He presents incentives to influence his actions. The voice of God speaks in reason's ear, which makes a *sensible impression* on the sinner's heart; but it does not follow that *Christ is in his heart*, because he feels these emotions of good.—When the guilty culprit inclines his ear to the voice of mercy—submits to God, and receives pardon for his sins—when the work of regeneration is thoroughly and perfectly effected in his heart, the devil is then de

* Rev. iii. 20.

throned, and all his dark malignant companions are with him expelled from the sinner's heart, the scene is then completely reversed; Christ is within, and satan is without.

The battle ground being changed, the devil becomes an offensive enemy, who, together with all his dark offspring and attendants—*pride, anger, envy, discontent, &c.*—pursue the victim just escaped from their destructive grasp with increased vigilance—they hover around his steps, and closely watch all his movements—every act he performs, and every word he speaks, and every thought as it matures in his mind. But while he guards carefully his heart against the assaults of those old inveterate foes, and continues to look unto Jesus for grace and strength, they can do him no injury.

These enemies are of a spiritual nature, and never grow weary; hence they are always prepared for the work of destruction, either by artifice or open combat. *PRIDE*, who like Saul, is a head and shoulders higher than all the rest of the sons of Anak, generally makes his assaults when we are in the presence of those who are gay, or rich, or wise and learned. When he fails on this ground, he will endeavour to persuade us that we are a little better than certain other characters—“*Our property—our talents—our family, &c.* elevates us at least a little above those obscure individuals.” Proteus like, this invidious foe assumes a thousand forms—wears any and

every disguise, if he may by any possible means gain his end, and tinge our souls with at least a little of his own dark complexion.

ANGER, sly and insidious as the tiger, haunts in silent concealment every step we make; and when we are *insulted*, or *injured*, he springs on us from his seclusion with almost resistless violence and makes a desperate effort to rend our souls, and regain an admittance into our hearts, from whence he had been expelled by the mighty power of God.

It is, however, a pleasing reflection, that we do not sustain any injury from this conflict; nor is it any disgrace to us when we are assailed by these enemies, if we ward off all their fiery darts with the shield of faith; but the moment we parley, or yield in the slightest degree, they begin to soil our garments, and to contaminate our souls.

The moment the christian is off his guard, and ceases to resist efficiently their attacks, then they enter in and take possession of their old habitation; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

All the power of our enemies lies in their artifice. Satan and his ministers, we are informed, can transform themselves into apostles of Christ, and angels of light.* We have seen satan's prime minister PRIDE, transform himself into quite another character, and assume the name and garb of *decency*; under this imposing mask, he has gained admittance

* Cor. xi. 13, 14.

into the hearts of the innocent and unsuspecting.

When an enemy is admitted into our house, even in disguise, it is reasonable to suppose, that he will open the door and widen the way, if practicable, for his companions in destruction. If an honourable and pious friend visit your house, and a drunken, profane, wicked wretch approaches your door, and you receive him into the same apartment, your pious friend will very soon give him his room, and leave you to enjoy your drunken companion's society, uninterrupted by his presence or his conversation. Light and darkness cannot mix. Christ and Belial can have no fellowship or concord with each other. If we admit the frequent and unopposed visits of *anger*, or *pride*, or *discontent*, &c. Christ will very soon leave us to enjoy the society of those disgraceful companions alone.

If however we be honest, and determined to maintain an unsullied character—a spotless robe—a pure heart, we need not fear the combined power or malice of all our enemies. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient for us even until death. But when our foes assume the garb of deception, and transform themselves into angels of light, then are we in the greatest danger. When satan comes as he did to unsuspecting Hezekiah, clothed in the alluring costume of princely honours, then should we fear and tremble.

When our wealthy and honourable neighbour, gives our family a friendly and pressing invitation to attend "*a small, social, select party,*" and assures us, "that there will be no dancing—that Mr. B., the president of the Bible Society, is to be there;" O how hard to escape these concealed snares. "We cannot—no, it would be uncivil and impolite to refuse—we must go,—otherwise our respectable neighbours will be offended." Satan's chief captain then approaches, carefully concealed in the white folds of DECENCY, and suggests—"It will not be treating our neighbours with respect, to appear in our present dress—no, we must not be singular—it will only injure the cause of religion—it will give them a distaste to christianity to be old-fashioned in our appearance, and besides, it will not cost much, nor will the money be lost; good articles are always the cheapest."

Thus PRIDE, under the imposing guise of DECENCY and *prudence*, enters unsuspected into our hearts, and then opens the door for the reception of all his dark companions. This deceptive monster has a bosom companion of despicable character; they are never long separated. His uniform practice is to insult and mock God; he hesitates not on any occasion to give Jehovah the lie! His name is UNBELIEF. This champion of infidelity has another friend as closely connected with him, as he is with PRIDE—*i. e.* the LOVE OF THE WORLD. This unholy triad cannot be

separated—when one is admitted, the others will intrude, if they have to force their way. Thus we may clearly perceive the imminent danger of suffering our enemy, under any pretext, or in any guise, to pass over the threshold of the door of our hearts.—Death, and misery, and hell, closely pursues his steps.

Amidst our difficulties, and the dangerous enemies by whom we are surrounded in this world, it is a consoling reflection that if we are faithful, every assault made on us by our foes, will only elevate our character and enhance our joys in heaven. The deepest wounds which can be inflicted on us, if we remain steadfast and immovable, will be our greatest glory in our Father's kingdom, when the war shall be closed, and eternal peace proclaimed. If the king of England had offered to make the commander-in-chief of the American armies his successor, and crown him with regal honours, on condition of his betraying the American cause; and Washington had rejected the offer with contempt, as he would have done, would not such a trial of his integrity have elevated his character in the estimation of every good man? While a consciousness of his own virtue and honesty, thus passing unalloyed through the ordeal, would have been a greater reward to him, than all the glory that sceptres and crowns have ever conferred on mortals.

Our exalted King looks down upon his subjects and children contending for their

rights with powerful and numerous foes, and says—"BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT ENDURETH TEMPTATION; FOR WHEN HE IS TRIED, HE SHALL RECEIVE A CROWN OF LIFE."*

From this plain view of the subject our esteemed friends will perceive that to be assailed by unholy tempers does not necessarily imply a degree of moral defilement. It is very certain that a soul may be *sanctified* wholly—may be *cleansed from all unrighteousness*—may be *perfect* in God's love, and be exposed to, and feel the buffetings of satan, through the channels we have specified. To be preserved blameless—to keep our garments undefiled by the touch of those evil tempers and dispositions, we must adhere closely to our Saviour's injunction, i. e.—"*Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*"

If, however, the doctrine of christian perfection is not both rational and scriptural, it must fall to the ground—it should at once be abandoned.

If our salvation is of the Lord; if God himself is the author of our *spiritual life*, then it is not only *reasonable*, but absolutely *necessary* that we should be *perfect* even now. Nothing has ever emanated from the hands of God in an imperfect state. In all the works of creation there is not a blot, or one *imperfect* line to be discovered by the most penetrating eye. The human body is entirely

* James i. 12.

perfect; nor is there an artist on earth who can suggest one rational improvement to this complicated piece of mechanism. The same may be said of every twig and of every tree in the forest—of every pebble and of every mountain—the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein—are the works of an Almighty hand, and all bear his divine signature, *i. e.* PERFECTION. Those stupendous works, were framed and finished in *six days*; but the work of redemption, which was effected by the same author, required a labour of thirty and three years.

Is it not altogether reasonable to suppose that the great work of *redemption* should bear the divine signature when it is inscribed on every atom in creation, whether visible or invisible?

If, however, we must remain imperfect in this life, and still bear the mark of moral defilement, the circumstance must proceed either from choice or necessity in the Author of our spiritual existence—of our present and eternal salvation. Either our divine Master must be *unable*, or *unwilling* to effect this great work—the supposition that he is *unwilling*, stamps his attributes with inconsistency and imperfection, which we cannot admit; to say that He is *unable*, is still more absurd.

Some who are opposed to the doctrine of *christian perfection*, run into extremes which cannot be justified. It does not follow, that

to be a *perfect christian*, the individual must be a *perfect God*, any more than a *perfect child* must be a *perfect man*. The child is as perfect as the adult; it is perfect as a child—it grows daily; yet it is still *perfect*. The same may be said of the sprout of corn; when it first appears above the ground, it is small and tender, but it is every way *perfect*; it must necessarily be so—God creates it; the same power causes it to grow; therefore it must be as perfect in its growth, as in its existence.

One imperfect line drawn by the divine hand, would dishonour God, and tarnish the glory of his name. Thus when a soul is *born of God*—is *thoroughly regenerated*, it must necessarily be *perfect*; although it resembles the infant, or the plant of corn; but the child of God should grow daily, as well as the child of man, or the vegetable plant; and this growth is as much the work of God, as the new creation; therefore both must, or should be *perfect*.

God is our Father; children, by an unbending law of nature, always resemble their parents. Shall God's children dishonour their Father? [See this subject noticed, page 151.]

Almighty God is the creator of all things; consequently every production of his, whether it is found in the kingdom of *nature* or of *grace*, must bear his signature, *i. e.* **PERFECTION.**

“ There’s not a pin in nature’s frame,
But forms a letter in Jehovah’s name.’

Our salvation is of the Lord, therefore the whole operation must be PERFECT. Thus we may clearly perceive that the doctrine of christian perfection is not only reasonable in its nature, but it is indispensably necessary in its existence, otherwise the divine attributes of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, would be destroyed.

Yet, however reasonable and necessary the doctrine of christian perfection may be, if it is not in perfect accordance with the word of God—with the holy scriptures, it must still be a phantom—it must fall to the ground. God’s written and revealed word is the only safe and sure guide to regulate both our faith and practice.

Inquire we then, is there any part of God’s written word which plainly condemns this important doctrine? It is thought by some that there is:—In St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, he says—“ *For we know that the law is spiritual; BUT I AM CARNAL, SOLD UNDER SIN.*”* If this passage and several others of the same import in this chapter, are to be considered as applicable to the apostle himself, at the time he wrote them, then does he plainly contradict his own declarations: in the following chapter he says—“ *For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* For

What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." (i. e. our fallen, unregenerate nature*) "*God sending his own son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:* THAT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW MIGHT BE FULFILLED IN US WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT."

This learned apostle, apart from divine inspiration, possessed too much discernment to be guilty of such an absurdity.—If, indeed, he spoke of himself—if he was *then carnal, sold under sin*, it would be highly improper to believe his statements; as the stream cannot rise higher than the source from whence it flows: it necessarily follows that his sentiments must be sinful and deceptive. Such an idea cannot be received.

His argument is designed to show the infatuated Jews the impracticability of receiving salvation by the deeds of the law. The law knows no mercy—mercy and pardon can flow only from Jesus Christ to guilty mortals; the Jews had rejected Christ, and would not have him to reign over them. In his conclusive argument, the apostle was the personal pronoun, I, for the same purpose that St. James uses the plural pronoun WE, when he says—"with the same mouth bless WE God, and curse WE men." The apostle himself could not *curse* any man. This manner of expression, softened the declaration and

* See ver. 9.

prevented irritation and prejudice; but produced conviction on the minds of his hearers, which should be the object of every minister in preaching the gospel.

But says the objector—"it is impossible for any unregenerate person to delight in the law of God." St. Paul says—"For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members;" therefore he must have meant himself—the experience must have been his own.

Such a conclusion from the premises does not necessarily follow; there is nothing even in this declaration to prove that the apostle meant himself, or intended to describe his own state after his conversion.

The *law of God* embraces all that is good, while it rejects and condemns all that is *evil*. Although man is deeply depraved, and has fallen into a deplorable depth of degradation and moral pollution; yet through the efficacy of the atonement made by Jesus Christ, even in his wicked state, the unregenerate man sees and admires that which is good, yet still he is so completely under the power and influence of his corrupt passions, and depraved nature, that he is utterly unable to practice that which is good.

Tell him that he is not so bad as many others—that he is a good man, &c. and he

will be pleased and delighted. But charge him with dishonourable conduct—hypocrisy, &c: call him a liar, and although it may be literally true, and his character as black as midnight, yet he will be desperately insulted; and why? because he delights in the law of God (*i. e.* honour and virtue) after the inward man.

The grace of God has so far appeared unto him, as to enable him to see that vice is a monster of a hideous mein, while there is something delightful in the very sound or appearance of virtue.

If, therefore, the most debased character in our country delight in virtue and honour in sentiment, is it surprising that an honest *penitent* who desires to flee from the wrath to come, and walk in wisdom's ways, should see a peculiar beauty in virtue, and *delight in the law of God*, although he be still unable to pursue the path of righteousness?—His fallen, corrupt nature, sweeps him with resistless violence down the stream of vice and folly. An utter insufficiency of the arm of flesh will be felt by all who sincerely desire to forsake the world, and engage in the service of God. But the condition of an honest enlightened Jew, who utterly rejects the grace of God, offered through Jesus Christ, is deplorable beyond description. His case, and his feelings, are finely described by our apostle, in the 24th verse—“*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from*

the body of this death?" He continues—"I thank God through Jesus Christ"—this name the Jew rejected, and there is salvation in no other. We know, and all who are saved from sin and death must know, that the name and merits of Christ are sufficient. His blood can wash out *every stain* which sin has made; nor is our apostle mistaken when he says—"But where sin abounded, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND."*

There is, however, another text which many firmly believe proves conclusively that all mankind do and must sin while they are in this world, i. e. "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*"†

Now, if this text is applicable to christians—to all christians, then it is only necessary to place the preceding verse along-side of it, to make a plain, palpable contradiction, which cannot be admitted if it is God's word—"But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN."‡

To avoid this dilemma, it has been said, that "the flesh sins, but the spirit does not." Neither reason, nor philosophy, nor God's word will sustain such a distinction. The flesh—or *matter* possesses no properties of action at all—it is dead—inert, unconscious, and unintelligible altogether. It is the pro-

* Rom. v. 20.

† 1 John i. 8.

‡ 1 John : 7.

perty of spirit alone to think or act; consequently our material part is utterly incapable of sinning against God in the smallest degree.

If, however, the subject is fairly represented—if our friends who differ with us in opinion will say—"that the fallen corrupt heart—the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, cannot exist without sinning, we will heartily subscribe to the sentiment. No man on earth can cease from sin until he is born again—thoroughly regenerated, and moulded in the image and likeness of God his Saviour; then can he say with the apostle, He that is born of God doth not commit sin; because his seed remaineth in him, and he *cannot* sin any more than an *honest* man can steal, and still retain his virtuous character.

May not the above text be rationally, righteously and satisfactorily explained by supposing that St. John addressed it to those proud self-righteous people who denied even to our divine Master that they were children of the devil—who contended that they were not sinners, or degraded like the Gentiles—they had Abraham for their father—they were in their own eyes altogether righteous—hence one of them stood and prayed—" *God I thank thee that I am not as other men are—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican,*" &c. To all such characters, (and there have been such in all ages,) the language of this text is very appropriate—" *if we say that we have no sin we deceive*

ourselves." For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. This plain, rational view of the passage removes every difficulty from the text, while it relieves and comforts the hearts of all those who desire above all things on earth or in heaven, to be pure in heart; whose greatest desire and glory on earth is to bear the moral image of God enstamped on their souls.

As the two passages which we have adverted to, contains the strongest evidence which God's word affords in favour of the hypothesis, that we must live in sin while we live on earth; and as we have proved that no such idea can be sustained rationally by those texts, we will now simply exhibit a few texts which will prove incontestably that christians *must be perfect* even in this life.

"*Noah was a just man, and PERFECT in his generation, and Noah walked with God.*"* He was not a *perfect* God; neither was he a perfect subject of the gospel dispensation—but he was a *perfect* servant or child of God, living in a day of less light than we enjoy. *Perfect* as far as his light and privileges extended.

There is another witness to prove the doctrine of *perfection* from among the early patriarchs. "*There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was PERFECT AND UPRIGHT, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.*"† Whatever Job

* Gen. vi. 9.

† Job i. 1.

may have said respecting the imperfection of his own knowledge and power, does not affect the subject at all. Those defects, great as they certainly were in him, and are in every human being, touch not his *moral character*. His soul was spotless and unsullied by sin; hence he says—“*till I die, I will not remove mine integrity from me.*”*

The pious Psalmist says—“*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.*”

But if there is no such thing as perfection among men on earth, then did David speak unintelligibly.

But we must appeal to higher authority than even the man after God’s own heart—our divine Master says—“*Be ye therefore PERFECT, even as your Father which is in heaven is PERFECT.*”† This injunction, bears the character of a divine command. Can we imagine for one moment that our merciful Saviour would command his followers to occupy a position which was to them completely inaccessible? Such a supposition is neither reasonable nor righteous.

Our Redeemer’s standard is very high—“*EVEN AS YOUR FATHER IS PERFECT.*” An inspired writer expresses the same sentiment in the following words—“*And every man that hath this hope in him, PURIFIETH HIMSELF EVEN AS HE IS PURE.*”‡

Many more passages of God’s holy word

* Chap. xxvii. 5.

† Math. v. 48.

‡ 1 John iii. 3

might be adverted to in proof of this important doctrine—but one plain text is as good as a thousand. The above we think sufficient to satisfy any unprejudiced mind; others would not be convinced either by argument, or by evidence.

It will be readily admitted by every christian, that at least our *motives* may be *pure*; and where they are defective or corrupt, the heart must be desperately wicked. It is therefore very possible that, by a careful investigation of our MOTIVES, we may discover satisfactorily the reason why there are not more living witnesses to establish the doctrine of christian perfection.

It will be acknowledged at once by all candid, intelligent christians, that in all we do or say, our *motives*, to be *pure*, should regard this one object, viz: to please God.

Perhaps some light may be thrown on this subject, by relating the substance of a conversation which recently passed between two friends; one of whom, it was generally thought, was disposed to be rather peculiar in his sentiments and manners. His friend (perhaps with rather more zeal and interest than the circumstance demanded) inquired, why do you not wear buttons on your coat behind?

He promptly replied, by asking his friend, would you have me to act without a motive, and thereby discover greater imbecility of

mind than the little child who plays in the sand, and builds houses out of straws, seeking thereby its own gratification? Suppose I was engaged in building an expensive establishment, and you were to ask me seriously what was my motive or design in erecting such a costly house; if it was for a dwelling house, or for a barn, or for a church?

I simply reply—"I do not know—I have no design or motive in building it." What would you think of me? Would you not think that I was a profound ideot?

Now suppose there were buttons on my coat behind, and an angel from heaven were to demand of me in solemn terms—why do you wear buttons on that part of your coat? What could I say? What wise and satisfactory reason could I assign for this trifling circumstance? Could you not, (replied his friend, with some warmth,) say that it was a customary thing—that you neither noticed nor thought about such a trifling circumstance—that such little, insignificant things were unworthy of the notice of a christian. I might say so, replied his fastidious friend; but suppose the heavenly messenger should point me to the holy book out of which I am to be judged, and show me a few passages there which read—"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.—Be not conformed to the world.—But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall

give account thereof in the day of judgement.—The hairs of your head are all numbered.—Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your heavenly Father's notice."

Suppose the angel should condescend to investigate my sincerity, in reference to my *indifference* about those *little, unimportant, trifling things*, which I say I do not condescend to notice, and pointedly ask me, "had your coat been sent home from the tailor's without any buttons on it behind, would you not have noticed the omission more or less?"

His friend, who really supposed that his old acquaintance was a little deranged, or wished to differ from others in his appearance and manners, for the sake of appearing singular, formed a different opinion, and changed the subject. He was convinced that no wise or rational being could act without a *MOTIVE*; and he was as fully satisfied that every *christian's* motive in all things should be to please God.

Let us act wisely and righteously in all we do, constantly looking unto Jesus for grace and strength to enable us to perform every act in a manner that shall be well pleasing to our heavenly Father; and God, who is rich in mercy, will water us with the fertilizing dews of heaven, and cause our souls not only to bloom in *perfect beauty*, but abundantly to bring forth fruit unto *perfection*, whereby God shall be glorified by us on earth; "and so an entrance shall be administered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—*Amen.*

THE END.

A SUPPLEMENT

TO THE

IMPORTANCE OF SMALL THINGS,

*Representing the duty we owe to the Church of Christ
and to the Heathen World.*

IF there is a subject on earth which should deeply interest the children of God, apart from their own salvation, it is the prosperity of Christ's church. In contemplating the present condition of our heavenly Father's family in this disordered world, we have felt not only pained and mortified, but we have been alarmed at the prospects before us, and the circumstances by which we are surrounded.

It is very possible that many will be startled, and pronounce us to be under the influence of an enthusiastic mind, and a distempered imagination. We know that the opinion which now almost universally obtains, is, that *all is well*. The watchmen are not only crying from every part of the walls of Zion, "PEACE—PEACE," but the substance of their report is, "PROSPERITY—*increasing and abounding* PROSPERITY."

It should, however, be remembered, that "*That the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.*" There are

many solemn and impressive cautions, given to the Lord's people in his holy word, to warn them of their danger, as well as to urge them to a faithful and diligent discharge of their duty.

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. *For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.* Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, &c. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, *they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,* until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils; and in thy name have done many wonderful works: "and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." "For when they shall say, *peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.*"

Those admonitory declarations and predictions, should induce every individual who wishes to reach the kingdom of heaven, to examine honestly and diligently, the ground

which he occupies. If we shall have to give an account for every idle word we speak, in the judgment day, surely we cannot be careless or remiss in discharging the least duty we owe to Christ, or his church, or our neighbour, or our own souls, and be innocent.

There is a prevailing disposition in our fallen nature to flatter ourselves—to discover no deformity when our own portrait is the object of investigation. It is not unusual to hear the victims of that fatal, flattering disease, which deliberately take its *seat in the breast of mortals*, say, and believe, “*there is no immediate danger—death is yet at a distance from our borders*,” even while they are sinking into the jaws of dissolving nature. As children of God, we should be more wise, and honest, and candid in the investigation of our spiritual maladies.

For a few years past there has been much said about—*general*, and *extensive* and *powerful revivals of religion*, in almost every living branch of the church; and we are glad to believe that some of the divisions of Christ’s little flock are improving very much in zeal and piety; as well as they are in their sentiments and doctrine; but alas how few do we see who are willing to *bear all things, and to endure all things; who when they are smote on one cheek will meekly turn the other—or when they are reviled and persecuted, and insulted and all manner of evil is spoken of them falsely for Christ’s sake, will rejoice and be exceeding*

glad. O how few can honestly and conscientiously say, "THEY DO LOVE THEIR NEIGHBOR AS THEMSELVES AND THUS FULFIL THE LAW OF CHRIST."

The view we are about to take of the church from the humble position which we occupy, can excite no jealousies—can produce no discord. We are entirely confident that the sentiments and feelings of all who really regard the prosperity of Christ's cause on earth, will be in accordance with our own. Whatever may be found defective in Christ's church, that can be corrected by human effort, without endangering the walls of the superstructure, should be plainly specified, and the remedy pointed out, when this is done to the comprehension of the plainest capacity, and the entire satisfaction of *every individual*; there should, and we have no doubt but there *will be*, a prompt and unanimous effort made to cleanse the sanctuary of the Lord—to beautify and restore to its primitive glory, the church of the Most High God on earth, as far at least as human agency is concerned in the important work.

It is known to every individual of any discernment, and almost every wayfaring man, that in this day of abounding light, and boasted prosperity, the CHURCH, including nearly every branch thereof, has become a *public MENDICANT—a common—a finished, AN ACCOMPLISHED BEGGAR. Public, and solemn, and eloquent, and pathetic* appeals are daily made to the sym-

pathies and benevolence of all who have either hearts or money ; nor are the very worst characters in the country passed by ; but to all grades and classes, and complexions, the church reaches out the palsied hand of poverty and distress, and pressingly solicits their pity and their pence.

This mortifying circumstance should cause us all to blush and hang our heads, and cry out with the pathetic prophet, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" Was the church of our Lord Jesus Christ driven to this painful alternative from real necessity, *we would sit down and weep in secret places—we would hang our harp on the willows, and refuse to be comforted.* We rejoice, however, to know that such is not the fact. There is no direful necessity for the continuance of this degrading state of things. There is a remedy ; it is plain—it is simple—it is easy of application, which shall be fairly stated in the following admonitory remarks.

Our friends—nay, even our enemies, (if any such characters there are in the world,) will not charge us with bigotry for expressing an opinion that there is more zeal and piety in the *Methodist Episcopal Church*, than there is to be found in any other branch of the church on earth. It is innocent and even proper, that we should love and prefer our own family above all

others. This privilege every charitable man will allow to every other man. But while we innocently, and we hope honorably, claim this indulgence for ourselves, we need not, neither do we intend to entertain any unkind feelings against others, or cast any unholy reflections on those who differ with us in sentiment, and are called by different names. We shall, therefore, on the present occasion, confine our remarks exclusively to the *Methodist Episcopal Church*.

It is a melancholy fact, known to our own members generally, and to our preachers universally, that many of the Lord's servants, laboring incessantly on the walls of Zion, who have forsaken all, to call sinners to repentance, are very deficient in their quarterage, and that from year to year, very many of our preachers do not receive more than one-half the amount they are allowed by the discipline, although it is estimated to be sufficient only for a bare support for them and their families. Nor is this all; the most mortifying part of the story is, that they are compelled to appeal to the generosity of the public, including all classes and grades of mankind, for that small portion which they do receive. To labor hard, and then be compelled to solicit favors from the enemies of our God and his holy religion, is too mortifying for serious reflection. We cast no imputations upon the respectable part of those who make no profession of religion, although the carnal mind is declared to be *enmity*

against God. In making public collections, we do, and are compelled to make application to the worst man in the congregation.

If the church is insolvent ; if she is unable to pay her preachers, and support the gospel within her own borders, then is she to be pitied. Such, however, is not the fact ; it would cast a reproach on every member of the church to make such a declaration. Resources are not wanting—they exist in great abundance ; and if this is the fact, which shall be satisfactorily proved, then must these deficiencies and evils proceed from either a *careless disposition*, or a *miserly spirit*, or a *want of information on the subject*.

We are disposed to impute the difficulty exclusively to the latter cause. We do believe that were *all our members* fully informed how much is wanting—how and when it should be paid ; and how the money for this purpose should be raised, there would not exist the least difficulty ; there would then be no necessity for appeals to the generosity—the charity of those who make no profession of religion.

If every member of our church would make a weekly contribution of SIX AND A QUARTER CENTS, it would amount to *two millions seven hundred and sixty-two thousand five hundred dollars, annually!* which would pay all the itinerant preachers in our church, 500 dollars each (which is a higher average than they

now claim) and leave a balance of 822,500 dollars, which might be applied to missionary and other laudable purposes. This calculation is made for the year 1841.

This important fact should astonish and alarm us all; it appears to be incredible; yet it is true, and will stare us full in the face in the day of eternity; for it is not possible that there can be *one member in our church in the enjoyment of common health, that could not pay SIX AND A QUARTER CENTS every week, for the support of the Gospel, and not feel it.* We do honestly believe that if *they* were *all bound slaves*, with the love of God abounding in their hearts, they could contribute that amount with perfect ease. Were the servants as *faithful* and *obedient*, and as much devoted to their master's interest, as the gospel requires them to be, and as much so as they must be if they are received into heaven, their masters would find it very much to their *interest* to give them *four times six cents every week.* But should their masters utterly refuse to give them *one cent per week*—were they *diligent*, and *faithful*, and *honest*, they could redeem a little time from sleep, in which they could make a broom, or a mat, or a basket; or, by their master's permission, they could raise some poultry, or cultivate a little grain, or vegetables, &c. which not one master in one thousand would object to, if their servants were what they should be, i. e. gospel Christians—

as *faithful*, and *honest*, and *diligent*, behind their master's back as before his face.

It is, however, very possible that this is not generally the character of servants who profess religion; if so, and they do not live by the above rule, they reproach the cause of Christ, and awfully deceive their own souls. Where Christian servants are deficient in the discharge of their relative duties; it is very possible it may be owing to a want of *plain, faithful* instruction—their teachers have been negligent; and if this is the fact, *will not their blood be required at our hands?*

It is said however, that “many of our members are in a *worse condition* than if they were slaves. Many of them are *infirm* and *old* and *poor*, and it is with great difficulty that they can procure a bare sustenance. Others again are *minors* and have no resources of their own!” To such objections we answer, that in every instance where there are *old*, and *infirm*, and *very poor members*, unable to support themselves, there are others at hand abundantly able to contribute their mite for them. It may be said—“*if they are able, THEY ARE NOT WILLING.*” If that is true—we *affectionately* and *impressively* ask, *how dwelleth the love of God in their hearts?*”

Many of our poor and infirm members indulge daily in the use of *tobacco* and *snuff*, and even the *dreadful poison of death*—ARDENT SPIRITS. In many instances they would con-

sider it a privation, and degradation worse than the grave, to be deprived of their *tea and coffee*. O the baneful influence of custom. Our ancestors, less than one century ago, scarcely knew the taste, or the destructive effects of those foreign drugs; yet they were not less virtuous, and far more healthy than we are now who dwell in the midst of luxury, and are surrounded by apothecaries and physicians. Those of us who know our Master's will, and the wants of his church, should teach our indigent brethren the way of the Lord more perfectly. For more than ten years past we have neither used *tea* nor *coffee*, except such as grow on our own soil: nor can we ever use them again, while any of our brethren are unable to procure and use them also, or while any of our heavenly Father's children on earth are suffering for the necessities of life; OR THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS COMPELLED TO BEG PUBLICLY FOR A SUPPORT; or the heathens are suffering for the bread of life. Our health has been uniformly better since, than before we abandoned the use of those articles; and *custom* has rendered the tastes of *substitutes*, equally pleasant to our appetite. Was this one species of luxury or extravagance cut off and put away from among us as Christians, it would abundantly more than pay *six and a quarter cents per week* for every member in our church which would amount to *two millions seven hundred and sixty-two thousand five hundred dollars, annually*.

It is presumable that if the use of that *bitter offensive, useless weed*—TOBACCO, was entirely dispensed with among our members, and the amount it costs thrown into the Lord's treasury, it would pay all the demands of the church.

Tea, coffee and tobacco, however, form a very small item in the account of our extravagances, which now beggars the church, and will stare us in the face with dreadful aspect in the day of final settlement. When we examine honestly, the excesses of our *table*, our *furniture*, our *houses*, and even the covering of our poor dying bodies, it should not only make us blush, but fear and tremble for the consequences.

No doubt but many will revolt at the idea of giving up their *tea and coffee*, and make as much noise, and throw up as much dust into the air, as did Demetrius and his friends to secure their craft. They will inquire—"what was it made for? will you *destroy commerce*? will you not drive us back to the savage life again?" It is possible that your friendship for *commerce* and love of the liberal arts, rests on a rotten foundation. Let us examine it. If an individual was so unwise as to sell his *tea and coffee*, and other articles of trade for less than they cost him in the East, or the West Indies, would you not be willing to purchase them at those reduced prices? If so, then by your economical virtue which may be righteously denominated the love of the world, you would forever destroy every branch of commerce. When you purchase

any article of extravagance, you do not consult the immediate or remote benefit of the vender, or the maker of the article—One who knew what was in man, said—“the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?”

Those who are wealthy, have generally large and pressing demands for their money from their poor friends and relatives, as well as from their passions and appetites. And those who are poor will not willingly give anything until they can live as well, and have things around them as plentiful as their more successful brother. Thus in the scuffle to gain this world's goods, and an emulation to vie with each other in *show* and *vanity*, God's cause is lost sight of, and his servants are compelled to appeal to the charity of their Master's enemies for a support.

As Christians, we should carefully examine ourselves at the close of every week, in an honest, candid, profitable manner. “Since all I have enjoyed, during the past week, has proceeded directly from the hand of God, every crumb of bread—every drop of water—every particle of clothing; *all—all*, has been the free and unmerited gift of my heavenly Father. Now, therefore, what return have I made to Almighty God for his abounding mercies? His *servants*, his *church*, calls on me for *three*, or at most, *six cents*—have I met that demand? Have I paid that account? *It is not exorbitant—It is not unreasonable. I can ask for no discount*

from the amount. If I have not paid it, am I just? And if I am not just and righteous altogether, surely I cannot enter into heaven.

It will be necessary now to examine carefully and rationally, the connexion which exists between the members of Christ's church on earth. "The Lord our God is one Lord." His children—his family must necessarily *be one*. Christ's express command is—"Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ; and ye are all brethren. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Mat. xxiii. 8—10. There should, therefore, be no *distinctions*, nor *divisions* among the children of God on earth. Hear Christ again. Neither pray I for these alone, but for those also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may *be one*; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, *that they also may be one in us*: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. John xvii. 20—23. John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." St. Paul says, "Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." 1 John iii. 2 Ephes. ii. 19.

The above passages of God's word, with many others, prove clearly the character of those who compose the church of Christ on

earth. They are all of the same honorable and dignified family; children of the same heavenly Father, and should therefore dwell together in *harmony* and *love*. Nothing can be more painful than *family discord* and *distinctions*.

Was the honorable, affectionate father, to see one child elevated to a palace, and reposing on beds of down, and faring sumptuously every day, while another of his children as dear to him, was left to pine her days away in a cabin without a floor—to sleep on straw, and live on bread and water; he could not say “*well done, my son, you have taken good care of number one.*” No, if he possessed any parental sensibility at all, he would weep over his poor slighted daughter, and her suffering orphans, and turn away pained and disgusted from her cruel brother.

Surely God’s family on earth should be more elevated and honorable—more dignified and harmonious than the most distinguished family in this disordered world. “How pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” What one child does, he should freely allow all his brethren to do the same. It has been already distinctly stated, that *one cent per week* from every member of that part of our heavenly Father’s family, designated by the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, would amount to 425,000 dollars every year. Now, by a *just* and *righteous* parity of reasoning, if we expend *one cent per week*

through the year, exclusively to gratify our passions and appetites, we recommend the same course to every member, and thereby *rob the church and Christ's servants* of 425,000 dollars; or if this immense waste is not effected by all our brethren, it is not by our good management—we have done all we can—we have acted our part fully.

It is vain for you to say—"my property is my own, I have a right to do as I please with it—I labored hard and made it honorably." That we acknowledge, you made it honestly, and in one important sense it is your own; but we deny your conclusion, i. e. that you have a right to do as you please with it. Your heavenly Father has a prior and a paramount claim:—he says, "the silver and the gold is mine." Therefore, as a good and dutiful child, you are bound to dispose of it agreeably to your Father's will and directions. If you have a right to expend *one cent or six cents*, another and all your brethren have the same right. Then it necessarily follows, agreeably to the above righteous principle, that every cent you waste, is equal to 8,500 dollars thrown away. And by the same rule, if you waste six cents, say every week for a year, it will amount to the enormous sum of 2,762,500 dollars.

This is a most alarming consideration; and when we reflect on the present state of the church, it imperiously calls on every one who feels any interest in the Redeemer's cause on

earth, to pause and weigh the consequences before they proceed one step further. Under such circumstances can any child of God say "This is a LITTLE THING—it only cost a *few dollars, or a few cents!*" If it is not essential to your *safety, or health, or real comfort*, we would say, "*touch not—taste not—handle not.*"

Every good man is delighted to see his children *prosperous, and virtuous, and unimpeachable in their characters*. Almighty God cannot be less affectionate than poor dependant man. God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; neither do we believe that the devil has changed for the better; his enmity and malice against God and his people are as great now, as they were in the days of Job.

Let us now suppose the recurrence of a similar scene between Almighty God and Satan, to that which took place when Job was upon earth. Suppose the important query was now put to the devil, by the great head of the church, "*hast thou considered my church, how she prospers, and increases, and how her borders are enlarged?*"

Would not the grand adversary exult to be challenged on this subject? Would he not point with secret delight to the present condition of the church, and inquire—"are these thy children? Are they the *light of the world—the salt of the earth?* Do they honor thy great name, and love thee supremely; and what evidence do they give of their pure and unsullied affection?"

“You call on them for *three cents per week* to pay your servants, whom you have placed on the walls of Zion, who go about night and day guarding the city, *but they cannot meet your demand.*

“They have to *solicit aid* from *my servants* to pay *your laborers*; they are compelled to beg from my children. Yet your children can ornament their houses, and decorate their bodies, and fare as sumptuously as my family; they will even contract debts, and destroy their peace of mind to accomplish that purpose. I order my people to point out, and persecute all who differ with them in appearance; they are faithful to my word. You command your children to come out from among the people of the world, and not conform to their ways; but they disregard your word, while they are so much afraid of me and my servants, of the finger of scorn, and the scowl of calumny, that they will bow submissively to the customs, and fashions, and maxims of my court, and say, ‘religion is now becoming respectable, even the wise and great ones of the earth are bowing to its mild influence.’

“They believe that my subjects are greatly changed; that they are now quite friendly to religion. But were your children to follow your son’s example and precepts, faithfully, and trample on the fashions and maxims, and honors and pleasures of this world, which we

hold more dear than life, then would they see that my liege subjects have not deserted my standard. They still rally under my banner, nor have they lost their disposition to rend and trample down all their enemies.

“Look at those (nor are they few in number) who pay more for snuff to ruin their speech, than you demand of them to support your ministering servants. See them pouring the dark fumes of smoke out of their mouths which you made for the most exalted purposes. See them repeatedly made sick, learning to use that bitter weed, to be like my children. Follow them into your house—your earthly sanctuary—see it degraded to the level of a barn. The poorest man’s house in the country they respect more than your sanctuary. It is no doubt the vulgar and ill-bred part of your family who act thus, but were it not for the example of those who are high in authority, the inferior ranks would not (much as they respect and fear my children) dare to indulge in the idle practices of either snuffing, chewing, or smoking.

“In many instances your children, are ashamed to appear before my people, my royal subjects, with a coarse hat on their heads, but will pay as much more for one, to conform to the etiquette of my court, as would pay all you demand of them for a year! You call on your servants for *three cents per week*, but you cannot succeed; I

call for dollars, and even those of your household will come forward and meet the demand without hesitation or reluctance. You call, and command, and threaten, with eternal fire; and then entreat, and offer a crown of life and glory, to endure forever; but your words are almost like idle tales. I have nothing but the momentary pleasures and honors of this world to place before my people; and they move with pleasing delight to obey all my commands."

To those *sneers*, and *taunts*, and *accusations* of Satan, what could a just and holy God say, seeing that they are true? Should we not fear that his anger will arise and consume us quickly? The great day of his wrath is coming, and who will be able to stand?

The evils under consideration are self-evident. They are not, they cannot be a subject of controversy. The facts are not only degrading, but they are glaring and must strike the mind of every honest inquirer with irresistible conviction.

It is not too late to apply a sovereign, an efficient remedy. Should the amputating knife be deemed necessary, let us use it with caution and affection, but with as much firmness and holy indignation as did Samuel when he hewed Agag in pieces. The practice of making public collections, degrades the church, and casts a dark shade of disgrace on God's children. Do you say, that the ser-

vants of God can scarcely live now, and if their supplies from that source were cut off, *they must stop—the church must sink.*”

Is it possible? have we come to that? Are we indeed dependent on the wicked, upon our divine Master's enemies, to hold up our hands, and keep the wheels of the gospel chariot moving? If so deplorable is our condition, and gloomy in the extreme must be our prospects. The wicked are a broken reed at best; to depend on them, is unwise and full of danger. If the church, in a state of peace and great prosperity cannot stand upright and firm, without leaning on the unregenerate, what would she do in perilous times? Suppose the wicked should determine to cast us off, what then would become of us! Has Christ established a church which is dependent on the pecuniary aid of his enemies for its existence? Such an idea will not bear reflection.

If the respectable, friendly part of the unregenerate, will *voluntarily* tender their aid, it may then be accepted without any impropriety.

To shew the difference between soliciting money from the people of the world, and accepting it when it is voluntarily offered by them, let us suppose a plain case: Suppose your preacher calls on A B, who is a rich man, but not a professor of religion, and request him to give him a dinner, or a supper, &c. affirming

that *his brethren in the circuit are either UNABLE OR UNWILLING to supply his wants*, would it not be an insult offered to every member of the church in the circuit? But if A B voluntarily solicits our preacher's company at his house, he wishes religious instruction, &c., he can then visit him with great propriety, nay, it would be an indispensable duty devolving on him as a minister of the gospel, and a follower of Jesus Christ, to go with the sinner, especially as those who are whole have no need of a physician. The circumstances, being varied, entirely change the character of the action.

It may not be improper, or unprofitable, to notice the *inconsistency* and *absurdity* of making public collections. The children of God are *the light of the world*; but should they be found guilty of a uniform course of conduct that would stamp the character of the wicked with infamy, *where is their light*?

Generally, Christians and ministers of the gospel, live as bountifully, and dress as comfortably, if not as extravagantly, as the people of the world; there is very little difference in the size, or quality, or cost of their houses, agreeably, to their circumstances. Suppose our neighbor, a wicked man, lives in a large costly house, fares well, if not sumptuously every day; entertains much company, and spends the day in ease and pleasure; but in the evening he changes his dress, and sallies out into the streets to BEG. What would be the

universal sentiment respecting that man, when his conduct was discovered? Would he not be disgraced and driven from the presence of the respectable part of society?

Let us now "*examine ourselves*;" do we not daily act the very same part which our wealthy beggar performs? with this exception, however, we do not change our dress when we solicit alms; but our pseudo neighbor would be altogether unsuccessful—nay, he would be ashamed to beg, while he was clothed in purple and fine linen. Have we learned our trade better than this unfortunate character? Or is our sense of honor more obtuse than his? or have we less refined sensibility of soul than he possesses? Would not the devil, in the interview which we have already supposed might occur between him and our great Creator, continue his taunts and say—"my children never beg publicly unless they are unable to secure a sustenance in any other way; were they to do so, they would be stigmatized as hypocrites, or drones. Look at your *learned*, and *eloquent*, and *fine dressed* servants, with what dexterity they press their necessities, and the poverty of the church upon my children."

Custom may reconcile good Christians to this degrading practice; and interest may induce many to frame excuses for its existence. Under the sanction of NECESSITY, and the obligations the wicked are under to God for the gospel, and all his mercies, we may even justify

the long established system of *indiscriminate public begging* ; but the laws of honor, which should be inscribed on every Christian's heart, will not cordially bend to embrace such a deformed object, when its visage is unmasked.

Our divine Master says, "*My yoke is easy and my burden is light.*" Now our preachers almost universally feel sensibly, that the custom under consideration, is a *galling yoke and a ponderous burden*, consequently it does not exist by Christ's authority. They submit, however, to the practice, because they deem it indispensable necessary.

That opinion cannot be correct. Our members have it completely in their power to support the church abundantly, including every contingent expense, without feeling it ; and we cannot believe that they are unwilling to discharge that important duty ; for was that really so, they could have no well grounded hope of entering into that rest which God has provided for his people. It is only necessary that all our members should be carefully, and diligently, and plainly instructed, therefore, great pains must be taken by our preachers and class-leaders, to teach them—

First—that there is an *imperious obligation* resting on every individual member of the church to *support the cause of Christ*, including the *preacher's pay*, and *all incidental expenses*. It is not the minister who binds this obligation on them, but GOD HIMSELF. Therefore, no

Christian with an enlightened mind, can live one entire week in health, and make no inquiry about the expenses of the Lord's house, and make no provision for its support, and have a conscience void of offence. Almighty God has a just demand upon every member of Christ's church, nor should any individual suffer the account to stand *more than one week without settlement*. The old adage should not be forgotten, i. e. that "*prompt payments make permanent friends.*"

Let no man say—"I am poor—A, B, and others are rich, let them meet the Lord's demands." Remember the claim stands against you, nor can you be justified until *you* have made an honorable effort to settle it.

Remember the demand against you for one week, is ONLY THREE CENTS, and then honestly and candidly make the inquiry.

Secondly—Have I made every reasonable exertion to meet the Lord's demand against me the past week? Could I not have redeemed time enough from unnecessary sleep; or from idle conversation; or from visiting; or from idle moments, to have made *three cents*, more than I have earned? If a farmer, could I not cultivate a small piece of extra ground, and lose no time in doing so, that would produce enough to pay the Lord's demands for his ministering servants, and the wants of the church? If a mechanic, could I not make some article worth *three cents* each week more than my family expenses, in

the time I have heretofore thrown away? If I am a hired, or a bound servant, could I not redeem time from sleep, or recreation, sufficient to make a broom, or a mat; or to knit a sock or a glove? Could I not cultivate a little lot of ground, or raise some chickens, at least sufficient to pay my divine Master's demand on me for the week, of *three cents*? Or could I not have done my work so diligently and faithfully, that my employer, or master, would have given me more than *three cents* cheerfully at the close of the week?

But should all our efforts prove abortive, and we find ourselves utterly unable to meet the Lord's demand; let us then cheerfully and honestly inquire—

Thirdly.—Have I saved every cent of my money during the last week that I could have done, so that my health and bodily comfort would not thereby have been impaired? Let me not forget that all my accounts, and calculations and efforts will be carefully examined on the judgment day.

On an impartial investigation, could I not have saved *three cents* from my ordinary food, without impairing my health? My father's children will appear with me in the great day of final settlement, many of whom were unable to procure either *tea or coffee*; others dispensed with the use of those articles exclusively from conscientious motives. Were I now to do so, could I not save *ten times as much* as

the Lord demands of me? I could, as many of my brethren have done, substitute *rye* for *coffee*, and *herbs* for *tea*; it would no doubt appear rough for a moment; but when I remember what Christ has *suffered* for me, and the present condition of the church, and poor children, as also the poor ignorant heathen, I should consider it a privilege to suffer a few privations on earth, well knowing that the more I am like my divine Master, the greater will be my enjoyment in heaven.

Could I not with great propriety, dispense with my *snuff* and *tobacco*, and *ardent spirits*?

Either of those unnecessary articles costs me more than *six and a quarter cents every week*, which, agreeably to our preacher's calculation, would in the year amount to *two million seven hundred and sixty-two thousand five hundred dollars!!* In the article of *dress*, could I not save more than *three* or even *six* cents per week, without impairing my health, or *real* comfort? Could I not have purchased a hat for one dollar, or one dollar and fifty cents, which would have answered my purpose as well, and have been as durable, as the one for which I paid *only four dollars!!* If so, then have I wasted in that one article, as much money as would have paid the Lord's demand for nearly two years. My broad cloth, &c.—O how much I might have curtailed from my dress in one year, were it not for the opinion of wicked men. Our sisters should also examine very

carefully their dress; their *bonnets, ribands, lace, combs, rings, veils, &c.*, and honestly inquire, in purchasing and wearing those articles, have I the glory of God—the benefit of his church, and his suffering children, (including the heathen,) constantly in view?

Reflection and calculations like these, will teach us more satisfactorily our Lord's design and meaning, when he says, "*except ye deny yourself daily, and take up your cross and follow me, ye cannot be my disciples,*" than all the wise and learned commentators who have ever lived.

While we must, as consistent Christians, condemn every species of excess and extravagance; *even to the value of one cent*, we would caution you particularly against the love of the world. *Don't save and then suffer it to accumulate on your hands*, or it will be like the excess of manna which the covetous Israelites gathered and laid up for future use; "*it bred worms and stank;*" and so will your earthly treasure, try it when you please. The miser is a more offensive and reprehensible character than the dissipated spendthrift. Therefore, while we husband up every moment of our time, and every cent of our money, let us be careful to secure its benefits permanently, by placing it all in God's bank in heaven.

Remember that God will bring every secret and every *little* thing into open view in the judgment day. Let us therefore honestly in-

quire, shall we be pleased with an exhibition of our account which stands *dollars for dress, and luxury, and useless articles, and only cents, perhaps nothing* for God's cause and the hire of his servants?

If the above considerations and calculations should fail to effect a salutary and entire deliverance from the charge of poverty and shame, after they have been *carefully* and *faithfully*, and *repeatedly* explained to every member of Christ's little flock, by the preachers and class-leaders; there is still another alternative—one which cannot fail to meet the object in view fully; adopt it, and every difficulty will vanish away, and every obstacle will fall to the ground. We allude to the *example* of those members who are in easy or affluent circumstances, including all our preachers.

We are all integral parts of the whole body, where there should be no schism or partiality. Our *wealthy brethren*, as well as the watchmen, who stand on the walls of Zion, occupy a most responsible station, and must feel a deep interest, not only in the prosperity of religion, but in the welfare and happiness of their indigent brethren. Therefore, the *preachers* and *class-leaders* should make themselves acquainted with every *poor member* in the classes over which they are called to preside. And when they have carefully instructed this interesting portion of our members what their duty is towards God and his church, and find they are really unable to

meet the demand against them for the week, then must the preachers and class-leaders procure for those unfortunate individuals, the necessary aid from others who are able and willing to assist them. This can be done without difficulty where proper management is used.

The manner, however, of instructing our poor brethren, is of the utmost importance. We need not say one word to them about economy, *unless we ourselves do that which we recommend to them.*

If we use TOBACCO in any way, it will at once stop our mouth and nullify all our arguments. They will inquire, do you use *tobacco*? How much does it cost you? *Six cents and a quarter per week*: Then I, as your brother, may do the same, and every other member in the church, and the money annually consumed by us in that article will amount to 2,762,500 *dollars*! They will say, "*Physician heal thyself, cast the beam out of your own eye before you attempt to remove the mote from ours.*"

If we use *tea* and *coffee*, we need not urge their poverty, and the demands of the church and God's cause, as a reason why they should not do likewise.

They will know (if our religion is not a mockery) *that we are all one in Christ Jesus—all children of the same affectionate Father*, whose peculiar regard is ever manifested for the poor and infirm part of his family.

It is therefore a fatal mistake to suppose, that because we have given *five*, or *ten*, or even *twenty* times as much as our portion into the Lord's treasury, we have thereby discharged our duty, and will be found innocent, while we set an example of *extravagance* before our brethren. Whatever we do, we recommend the same course to every member in the church ; and as brethren possessed of affectionate, fraternal feelings, we should be unwilling to enjoy our earthly comforts, while one child in the family is unable to procure and enjoy them also.

Uriah utterly refused to sleep on a *bed of ease and comfort*, while his brethren were compelled to sleep on the *ground*.

As Christians—as children of the most high God, our connexion with each other, and our exalted station on earth, should not be lost sight of for one moment. Nor should we for one moment forget, that acting on honorable and righteous principles as God's family here below, whose will must be done on earth as it is done in heaven, that every cent we expend unnecessarily, is, in reality, *eight thousand five hundred dollars wasted* ; and if it is repeated every week for one year, it will amount to *four hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars* ; and should we extend our excesses to six and a quarter cents every week for a year, it would amount to the enormous sum of *2,762,500 dollars* ! An amount of money sufficient to pay all our preachers, and to build all our churches.

and leave a balance of upwards of *eight hundred thousand dollars* for missions and benevolent purposes.

With this view of the subject staring us full in the face, can Christians still indulge in the use of things which cost money, exclusively to gratify their *passions* and *appetites*—articles which are not really necessary to their health or comfort, while the church and God's ministering servants have to beg from the wicked the crumbs which fall from their table; and they can still be pleasing in the sight of God, and qualified for the joys of heaven, then are we utterly at a loss to comprehend the Christian character, or that system of self-denial so pressingly and uniformly recommended in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and acted upon by our divine Master, and his disciples.

We are fully convinced that there is nothing wanting to elevate the church, and to deliver her from every pecuniary embarrassment, but to exhibit the above theory *fairly and impressively* before our members; and then enforce it by a *faithful example* from all our *preachers*, *class-leaders*, and the more *independent* part of our members. Let this be done honestly, and we may at once dispense with our plates and soliciting bags. Then will the proper authorities have to interdict the offerings of the people, as did Moses in the wilderness.

Christians! *highly favored* people of the Lord, in this day of light and great prosperity,

look at the condition of the church, and at the means you have within your reach, without making one extraordinary effort, to relieve and elevate her above the frowns of poverty; and then hear, and blush at the honorable testimony borne in favour of the ancient Israelites, under the most unfavourable circumstances:—"And they spoke unto Moses, saying, the people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and *too much*." Exodus xxxvi. 5, 6, 7.

When we reflect on the conduct of the Israelites in the case adverted to, and the circumstances by which we are surrounded, surely we should blush and hide our heads. Can we indeed consent to wear soft raiment and fare sumptuously every day, while our Redeemer's church and cause is sitting at the feet (not of Gamaliel) but of the wicked, and crying, "Help, help—O ye men of Gath, pity and save us, or we shall perish."

Let us rise up like men of God—like honorable children of the Most High, and roll away this reproach from our Father's family. Let us cast our idols to the moles and to the

bats, and stand on holy ground. Who that loves his divine Master's cause, that would not be willing to *live on bread and water*, and clothe their poor dying, corrupting bodies with sack-cloth, if they could see the church of Christ prosperous and independent?

It is only necessary to *resolve—to say the word—to recede from our extravagances*, and cast *one hundreth* part of the redeemed mite into the treasury of the Lord, and the *work is done*.

Perhaps after reading the preceding remarks, some of our friends may suppose that we believe it is only necessary for the church to support herself, to meet all her own demands from her own internal resources, to constitute her a *living, a pure church*, such as the righteous judge will approve and receive in the day of judgment. No, St. Paul says, "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Nothing will constitute us gospel Christians, but the *certain knowledge* of the remission of our sins. Our souls must be washed and made white in the blood of the lamb. The atoning blood of Christ alone, applied by FAITH, is sufficient to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and prepare our souls for the joys of heaven. We must be sanctified *wholly*.

But when these gospel blessings are enjoyed, they will be made manifest by our works.

Therefore, we may bestow all our goods to feed the poor, or to support the gospel, and live on bread and water, and possess every external form of religion, and still be only sinners in the sight of God ; yet, without attending to the outward ordinances, and external duties of Christians—without making every exertion in our power to support the *honor*, and *dignity*, and *prosperity* of Christ's church on earth, we cannot enjoy the testimony of a good conscience. "And if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." Neither can we stand acquitted in the great day when His wrath shall be revealed.

In conclusion, we will simply remark, that every *selfish, contracted feeling* should be expelled from our hearts as Christians. There should be but *one fold—one cause—one mind—one effort* made by the little flock spread over the green and flourishing portion of these United States, to promote the prosperity and happiness of the whole.

Our fathers, the bishops, presiding over our one undivided family, should ascertain how much from every member would be sufficient to supply the demands of the church, and let it be known; and if every preacher and class-leader will do his duty, the whole will be collected without difficulty. There must then be an equal distribution made without regard to the section, conference, or circuit, where it was collected. There would then be no care

resting on the minds of the preachers about their pecuniary supplies. It would then make no difference to any preacher what conference or circuit he was appointed to labor in. If there was but a score of little ones under his charge, they would only pay their three or six cents per week, and his salary would be secure.

No member of the church under the influences of either charity or sympathy, could object or be unwilling to see a surplus of money go from his circuit or section to supply the wants of others who were more destitute. Surely every individual member of the church would not only be willing, but rejoice to see his THREE, OR EVEN SIX CENTS PER WEEK, go even to the utmost bounds of the Lord's vineyard to relieve the necessities of his poor brethren, whose only crime was to be poor, and few in number..

By pursuing the above easy, and plain and righteous course, out of over 800,000 *dollars* surplus, which *six and a quarter cents* per week, would produce, after paying our preachers, and building all our churches,—how easy would it be to build a small plain house, and purchase a few acres of ground for every poor disconsolate widow, in our church. Or if it should be deemed advisable to turn part or all of this stream of mercy into the long neglected deserts of Africa, would it not cause that wilderness and solitary place to blossom and

bloom as the rose? Five hundred thousand dollars per annum for missionary purposes, would be an acceptable offering for one branch of the church to make, even in these days of abounding liberality. O how such a thought should spring every heart and hand into action; especially when we hear the righteous Judge say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Will not this soul-transporting declaration excite us all to a holy emulation, to a rigid course of self-denial on earth, that our ears may hear the joyful sound, of well done, good and faithful servant, when we shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ?

